

Yemeni mediation panel sidetracked

SANAA (AP) — Socialist allegations that Prime Minister Haider Al Attas was accused by north ern soldiers while trying to enter the capital sidetracked a resumed effort Saturday to resolve a dispute between southern and northern leaders. The "dialogue committees" composed of high-ranking tribal figures and officials discussed the incident and ordered a special investigating team headed by Interior Minister Yehya Al Mutawakil to report on the incident. Committee members had planned instead to discuss ways to resolve the dispute between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh that has plunged the country into a deepening political and economic crisis. Socialists said three units of military police equipped with heavy, medium and light arms intercepted Mr. Attas' motorcade Friday on the outskirts of the capital. The party contended the force was led by an officer known to be close to President Saleh (see page 2). The Socialists complained that Mr. Attas, a member of the party, was allowed to proceed only after he contacted a number of leaders, including the president.

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King visits JIB in London

LONDON (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, who is on a private visit to the United Kingdom, Saturday visited the Jordanian Information Bureau in London and met with its staff. Bureau head Nasser Judeh briefed the King on the office's activities which were initiated in 1992. He said that the bureau had started contacts with Jordanian students in Britain to provide them with cultural and economic and political publications about Jordan. The bureau is entrusted with presenting the Jordanian views to the British press.

Syria slams Arafat for missing deadline

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria Saturday sharply criticised Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat for missing a deadline for an agreement on the details of an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. "Israel is hypocritically playing for time and knows that Arafat will lay down his cards once after the other to achieve any gain to hold up to the Palestinian and Arab opposition," the official Al Thawra daily said. "Israel knew the PLO leader could no longer stop (his initiative) since surrender is a bottomless pit," the paper said. "So the game of blackmail began just when Arafat seemed defenceless." Mr. Arafat, it argued, was desperately trying to salvage the Israeli-Palestinian accord on limited autonomy for Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho signed Sept. 13 in Washington, adding that his concessions would completely water down the deal. "All the agreement's clauses will then be interpreted according to Israeli logic and not be subject to discussion," it said.

Holst suffered a minor stroke

OSLO (AP) — Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst, who secretly brokered a secret Middle East peace agreement, has suffered a minor stroke, his doctors said Saturday. Mr. Holst was hospitalised for the second time in three weeks late Thursday after he became acutely ill aboard a government jet that was bringing him home from meetings in Spain. "He has been fully conscious the whole time and his intellectual functions have not been affected," said a brief statement signed by his doctor, Rolf Nyberg-Hansen, of the National Hospital in Oslo.

Libyan rebels sure dissident kidnapped

CAIRO (AFP) — The Libyan opposition in Egypt said Saturday it was "convinced" that one of its leaders, Mousour Kikhaia, who went missing in Cairo last Saturday, had been kidnapped by agents of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. Mohammed Jibril, Cairo spokesman for the opposition Libyan National Salvation Front, told AFP that on Thursday the front managed to contact Mr. Kikhaia's brother Mahmoud, who lives in Benghazi, in northeastern Libya. "Mahmoud Kikhaia said a Libyan official had assured (Mansour) Kikhaia's relatives that Mansour was in Libya, but did not say whether Mansour's family had managed to meet him, or whether the Libyan dissident went to Libya willingly," Mr. Jibril said. "The Libyan opposition is convinced Mansour Kikhaia was kidnapped by agents" of Colonel Qadhafi, Mr. Jibril said. (See page 2)

Assad meets Sedki

DAMASCUS (AP) — President Hafez Al Assad met Saturday with Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki for talks on the latest developments in the Middle East and to bilateral relations. The official Syrian Arab News Agency said Dr. Sedki briefed Mr. Assad on the meetings of the supreme joint Syrian-Egyptian committee and efforts to boost cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

Israel, PLO meet in Oslo in bid to end self-rule deadlock

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials were set to begin key talks in Oslo late Saturday in a bid to break the deadlock over implementation of the Palestinian autonomy plan, a senior Israeli government official said.

The official said the six-member Israeli team would include Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Israel's chief negotiator at the autonomy talks in Egypt, General Amnon Shahak.

The delegation would try to "overcome the differences which arose recently," the official said, but he stressed that Israel would "not make any concessions on security matters."

Asked whether Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would meet PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Cairo next week the official said "everything depends on the results of the contacts over the next few days."

The two leaders failed to agree on key aspects of implementing Palestinian autonomy at talks in Cairo last Sunday, but said they hoped to meet again in about 10 days' time.

Israel and the PLO began direct talks on Oct. 13 in Egypt to launch Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho by Dec. 13, but failed to meet the deadline set out in the accord signed in Washington in September.

Israeli Television said on Saturday that Mr. Rabin's political adviser Jacques Neria had "gone abroad" to hold talks with PLO officials, but gave no further details.

Israeli army radio meanwhile said Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and foreign ministry director-general Uri Savir would join the talks in Oslo on Monday. They would focus on the future Palestinian police force to be deployed in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, the radio added.

Earlier, a PLO official in Tunis said the PLO would offer to drop its demand for sole control of crossing points, at the meeting with Israel in Norway.

Chief negotiator Nahil Shaath and other PLO officials will instead propose that an equal number of Israeli forces and Palestinian police man posts between the self-rule areas and Egypt and Jordan, the official said.

The official, a member of the PLO Executive Committee who asked not to be named, said the delegation would also offer some compromises in other areas which he did not specify.

The PLO delegation arrived in Cairo Friday after receiving its instructions from Tunis, and then left the Egyptian capital for Oslo on Saturday.

Sources in Cairo said the PLO team travelling to Norway included Yasser Abed Rabbo, the organisation's information department head.

"We want to prevent the next Arafat-Rabin summit failing as was the case for the last one in Cairo," Mr. Abed Rabbo told Reuters before heading for Oslo.

The PLO was willing to compromise in some areas to meet Israeli security demands, he said.

He said the PLO was ready to share control of borders with international forces which

would ensure Palestinians did not smuggle heavy arms into the occupied territories.

Electronic surveillance of border points by Israeli authorities would allow them to monitor the identity of those passing through, Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

Israel says the two sides agreed at the outset that it would have responsibility for external security. The PLO says the declaration of principles leaves the control of the borders to be negotiated.

"What is the meaning of Israeli control of the passages when these are for access to Palestinian zones from which the Israelis have withdrawn," Mr. Najab said.

On Jericho, the PLO says the area should be about 300 square kilometres. Israel puts the area at 27 square kilometres.

The PLO says Israeli security patrols in Gaza should be confined to the settlements. Israel, PLO officials say, wants control of about 10 per cent of the strip to do the job.

In the Norwegian capital, foreign ministry spokesman Jan Egeland said that U.S., Russian, Egyptian and European officials would join in the talks on Monday at an Oslo hotel.

Talks snagged on the control of crossing points between the autonomous areas and neighbouring Egypt and Jordan, as well as on the size of the Jericho district and an Israeli troop presence around Jewish settlements.

The Palestinians had demanded sole control over the borders. Mr. Peres said in Paris Thursday that Israel must re-

(Continued on page 3)



A young Palestinian kicks a burning tyre during a protest in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on Saturday against the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement (AFP photo)

Israeli soldiers clash with Ramallah protesters

RAMALLAH, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers clashed with four Palestinians in the occupied West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday, Arab sources said.

The army sealed off the town during the clashes by setting up checkpoints on major roads, eyewitnesses said. An army spokesman said it was declared a closed military area because people were throwing stones and burning tyres.

Reuters photographer Khaled Zighari was lightly wounded in the leg by a rubber bullet when soldiers dispersed a group of Palestinians throwing stones at paramilitary border policemen.

"I was in the centre of the city," he said. "Young Palestinians began to throw stones at the soldiers. The soldiers were ready to shoot. The first shot hit me."

Local residents said three other Palestinians were slightly wounded when troops fired rubber bullets and percussion grenades at 30 to 40 stone-throwing youths.

The youths, demonstrating against the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) peace deal with Israel, burned tyres and blocked off a main road in the town.

Under the deal signed by Israel and the PLO in September, Israeli forces should have started withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho on Dec. 13.

But disputes between the two sides have led to a delay in implementing the accord.

Reuters photographer David Silverman said he saw soldiers checking cars entering Ramallah from Jerusalem and a helicopter circling over the town.

In the West Bank town of Nablus on Saturday, about 120 Palestinians demonstrated against the PLO and its deal with Israel.

Leading the protest was an eight-year-old boy holding a submachinegun, witnesses

said. Militant Palestinian groups and Jewish settlers have stepped up attacks in an attempt to wreck the deal.

Since news of the deal emerged in September, 44 Palestinians and 18 Israelis have been killed.

Israel will for the time being not take the PLO and its mainstream Fatah movement off the "terrorist" organisations list, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Friday.

"We must first do some checking, to the extent where certain problems seem linked to certain marginal elements of Fatah, before we proceed with changes," he said on Israel television.

Mr. Rabin has for over a month refused to approve a bill requiring that the PLO, Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Army be removed from the list of organisations considered "terrorist" under Israeli law, the television said.

Parliament must vote on the bill before it becomes law.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and the pro-Iranian Lebanese Shiite movement Hizbollah are the two latest organisations to have been included on the list in 1989.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat announced an end to the armed struggle against Israel following the signing of the Sept. 13 autonomy accord for the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

But Israeli Television said the Fatah Hawks, the movement's armed wing, had killed an Israeli settler on Oct. 30 near the West Bank town of Ramallah. The killing was condemned by Arafat.

The Israeli army has meanwhile removed the names of 36 activists of the Fatah and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) movements from the list of wanted Palestinians, military sources said Friday.

The activities include six members of the Red Eagles group, the PFLP's armed wing,

which opposes the Israeli-PLO autonomy deal, they said.

Fatah-PFLP clashes

Six Palestinians were wounded in clashes here on Saturday between militants from Fatah faction and the PFLP, Palestinian sources said.

The clashes arose from a private dispute over possession of a football pitch in the Sheikh Radwan district, the sources said, and were not linked to the PLO-Israel accord on limited autonomy for the Palestinians.

The militants exchanged blows and threw stones at each other before leaders of Fatah and the PFLP managed to separate them.

Earlier in Jerusalem a commander of an Israeli undercover unit said the army had stepped up the activities of its undercover units, responsible for tracking down wanted Palestinians, due to a rise in anti-Israeli attacks.

Speaking on Israeli Radio, the commander, whose name was not given, said: "We have a bigger presence on the ground and our activities have been bolstered, due to the growth in the activities of (extremists) who claim success in killing settlers."

"They are using increasingly sophisticated methods, and we are adapting to them, because our work against wanted armed Palestinians continues."

He said there was no question of dismantling the special units, whose members are usually disguised as Palestinians, despite the Israel-PLO autonomy accord.

Several Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations have slammed the special units' actions, accusing them of liquidating Palestinians.

The colonel insisted his unit was "not a unit of killers, inasmuch as it follows the same orders on when to open fire as those in effect in the army as a whole."

Nabulsi: Reopening of banks unrelated to accord with PLO

AMMAN (J.T.) — The reopening of Jordanian commercial banks in the Israeli-occupied West Bank is not contingent on the signing of an economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Mohammad Said Nabulsi said Saturday.

Dr. Nabulsi said he was surprised by news reports on the subject. "The reopening of the Jordanian banks in the occupied territories that were closed in 1967 has been (under consideration) since 1968," he said.

On Friday, Agence France Presse quoted a Jordanian official as saying: "We can no longer wait and if the PLO has not replied by Dec. 20, we will interpret this silence as an answer and will go ahead and open our banks."

Dr. Nabulsi said that there had been many attempts to reopen the banks in the past, but they were unsuccessful except for the Cairo-Amman Bank that resumed operation in 1986 through a special agreement.

He said that since the peace talks had started the time was suitable for reopening those branches within the framework of peace. The matter has been discussed and the banks will reopen under new regulation, the CBJ governor said.

Dr. Nabulsi pointed out that eight banks with 31 branches operated in the West Bank until 1967.

He said that Jordan and Israel had reached a memorandum of understanding within the framework of the peace talks by which the CBJ would oversee the work of these branches and their licensing.

He added that the Palestinian side is aware of the agreement with the Israeli side.

Dr. Nabulsi said he asked Jordanian banks to be ready for the go ahead once the Cabinet approved the CBJ arrangements.

Jordan-PLO accord

Deputy Prime Minister Maan Abu Nuwar told Parliament Wednesday that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was expected to refer the draft economic accord document to the PLO Executive Committee for study as soon as he ended a visit to Britain and Ireland.

Dr. Aho Nuwar rejected deputies' suggestions that the draft agreement had "failed" and said he was personally assured by Mr. Arafat that it would be followed up.

Mr. Arafat returned to his Tunis headquarters Thursday from Ireland and chaired several meetings of the PLO leadership.

Algerian presidency may get extension

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The mandate of Algeria's ruling high State Council could be extended by a month until the end of January, Radha Malek, prime minister and member of the presidential council said Saturday.

The extension of the mandate was requested by the National Dialogue Commission, formed to seek a solution to the country's political crisis which has pitted the military-backed government against Islamic fundamentalists, to allow time for a conference on the transition.

The council's mandate was due to expire on Dec. 31. The five-member council has ruled Algeria since January 1992, when the authorities cancelled a general election in which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a huge first-round lead.

Mr. Malek told foreign journalists that the dialogue commission, which is holding talks on leading Algeria to democracy, had asked for a one-month extension for its work.

Because the commission was responsible to the ruling council this would involve extending its mandate as well, Mr. Malek said. "The two are linked," he said.

On Thursday night Mr. Malek said in a television interview that the council would step down at the end of the year, as planned.

The five-man presidency has been trying to prepare a political conference to organise a gradual transition to a multi-party democracy and free-market economy. Algeria has been under emergency rule for almost two years.

But so far the council has fought shy of giving any role to

the FIS, which wants to establish an Islamic state and says it won more than 80 per cent support in the first round of voting in 1992.

On Friday police rounded up dozens of men after prayers at two fundamentalist mosques in Algiers after the banned FIS set conditions for talks with the government.

The authorities replied to the offer with several conditions of their own which appeared to exclude the front but left the door open to others.

Since the cancellation of the 1992 poll, at least 1,800 militants, civilians and security personnel have been killed in political violence, including 23 foreigners targeted by the militants since September. The prime minister said a decision on whether to extend the council's mandate had not yet been

taken, saying this was up to the six-member High Security Council.

But he said the security body, which includes Mr. Malek, the army chief-of-staff and the defence, interior, justice and foreign ministers, was likely to view the request favourably.

The Islamic Salvation Front Friday set conditions for talks with the government on two years of political unrest.

The authorities replied to the offer with several conditions of their own which appeared to exclude the FIS but left the door open to others.

An exiled FIS leader, Rahab Kebir said in Bono on Friday the front had five conditions for talks, beginning with the freeing of what he termed political prisoners.

(Continued on page 5)

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Home News

Government prepares to establish national oil and gas company

AMMAN (J.T.) — In implementation of guidelines contained in the Speech from the Throne before Parliament last month, the government is in the process of establishing a national oil and gas company to take over the role currently played by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) in prospecting for oil and gas in Jordan, according to an announcement by NRA Director-General Fakhreddin Al-Daghestani.

At present, the NRA is focusing its attention on the Lisan area, along the Dead Sea coast, where it has conducted seismicological surveys, said Dr. Daghestani in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The NRA plans to issue a statement in the first quarter of 1994 giving details about the outcome of the seismicological survey and, in its light, the decision will be taken whether to pursue test drilling the operations in the Lisan area or halt there, Dr. Daghestani continued.

Earlier this year, the NRA drilled a well on the Dead Sea coast where signs of crude oil surfaced, but due to the closeness of the well to the sea, water filtered and filled the well.

Currently, the NRA is drilling two other wells, further away from the old well, with the purpose of determining the geological strata surrounding the three

wells, Dr. Daghestani added. In addition, he said, the Jordanian government last July signed a contract with the South Korean firm Hanbo to prospect for crude oil in the Rashah and Wadi Sarhan areas.

The NRA is also focusing on the Rishah area, close to the border with Iraq, where natural gas is being exploited, he pointed out. The Rishah fields provide nearly eight per cent of Jordan's overall energy requirements, or 20 per cent of the Kingdom's electric power consumption, according to Dr. Daghestani.

"This is a relatively small amount but the NRA is drilling another well south of Al Rishah fields in order to find out if additional gas reserves exist there, he said.

Altogether, he added, 27 wells have been drilled in the Rishah area to date but some of them are unproductive.

In his speech from the Throne, delivered Nov. 23, His Majesty King Hussein said that "the government has continued oil and gas explorations in the Rishah and Dead Sea regions. It has expanded the capacity of the Rishah gas, operated power turbines and measures are being taken to establish a national oil and gas company.

Referring to the oil shale which is found in abundance in some parts of Jordan, Dr.

Daghestani said that the NRA has been conducting studies on the shale since the 1970s with the purpose of utilising it as an alternative source for oil. But, he noted, the cost of producing one barrel of shale oil proved to be costly, amounting to \$30, which makes the whole process economically unfeasible.

Dr. Daghestani highlighted the importance of the Dead Sea noting that its contents represent a real treasure for the Kingdom.

According to the NRA chief, the Dead Sea could be utilised as health spa while the water could be a source for chemical products for various industries.

Dr. Daghestani referred to the fertilizers company in Aqaba and pointed out that it was consuming some one million tonnes of raw minerals in the course of producing the fertilizers.

He said that the Arab Potash Company (APC) could make better use of the Dead Sea minerals by establishing companies specialising in the production of bromine, magnesium oxide and other products.

Asked on the prospect of exploiting copper, Dr. Daghestani said that Jordan has very limited quantities of this mineral and, in view of the current world copper prices, refining of copper in Jordan is unfeasible.

Peacekeepers and PSD officers get Royal medals

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces has conferred Jordanian "peacekeeping medals" on PSD officers participating in the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia and Cambodia. Public Security Department (PSD) Director General Abdul Rahman Al-Udwan presented the medals to a group of officers representing the units taking part in the peacekeeping mission during a special ceremony held at the PSD headquarters Saturday.

General Udwan paid tribute to the Jordanian peacekeepers who, he said, had contributed towards lessening tension in troubled areas and served as ambassadors of their country abroad. He expressed hope that the honouring of the officers would give them further incentives for further sacrifices.

Gen. Udwan also attended a ceremony in Amman, Saturday, in observance of Arab Police Day. Brigadier Muhammad Tarazi, the PSD assistant chief for judicial affairs, delivered an

address noting that the anniversary serves as means of honouring all policemen in the Arab World. He stressed that the occasion gives impetus to the PSD to exert all efforts towards continued modernisation of its system and ensuring stability and security for the Jordanian people. Later, Gen. Udwan honoured a number of officers who had performed remarkable services and distributed Royal medals to them. He also opened a PSD club which cost nearly JD 7 million.

Qatari education minister starts visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Qatari Education Minister Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Turki Saturday started a four-day official visit to Jordan. Upon arrival he announced that his country was concerned in holsting its ties with Jordan in all fields.

Mr. Turki, who was met upon arrival by his Jordanian counterpart Dr. Khaled Omari, said that he would meet with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and would hold talks with Acting Prime Minister Maan Abu Nowar and Higher Education Minister Saeed Al Tell as well as other government officials to promote Qatari-Jordanian relations.

Mr. Turki, who is scheduled to visit the University of Jordan and other Jordanian higher education institutions, said Jordan and Qatar were linked by a number of educational

agreements which help bolster ties between the Qatari and Jordanian people. Expressing hope that the visit would further bolster bilateral ties, Mr. Turki said that his discussions here would mainly focus on cooperation in educational fields.

Dr. Omari, who extended the invitation to Mr. Turki, said upon welcoming him at the airport that the two sides would work out an executive programme for the implementation of an educational and cultural agreement earlier signed by the two sides. Qatar hopes to expand bilateral scientific, cultural and educational cooperation to involve most Arab states, he added.

Accompanying Mr. Turki on the visit, is a large delegation of officials from the ministry of education in Qatar.

NEWS IN BRIEF

House to hold a session today

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament holds a session Sunday to hear government replies to queries by members of the 12th Parliament. The House will listen to a reply by Information Minister Jawad Al Anani about Jordan Television coverage of news about the Palestinian expellees in Marj Al Zuhour and another by Awqaf Minister Abdul Salam Al Abbadi about matters related to the Islamic cemetery in Amman. The House will also discuss a special session held later to debate the on-going peace process and Jordan's stand with regard to this process.

Cabinet forms delegations

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday formed Jordan's delegation to the meetings of the Arab ministers of transport due to be held in Cairo on Dec. 28. It also formed Jordan's delegation, which represents the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), to travel to Syria and buy an international telephone exchange system for the TCC. It also approved of the Ministry of Tourism's participation in a tourist exhibition to be held in Berlin at the beginning of next year.

Archaeological excavations continue in Aqaba

AQABA (Petra) — The Department of Antiquities announced Saturday that archaeological excavations are currently under way at the Ayleh Islamic site in the port city of Aqaba. It said that the site dates back to the early Islamic era, noting that a team of archaeologists from Chicago University in the United States is helping the department to carry out the excavation work.

Abbadi meets Iranian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Abdul Salam Al Abbadi Saturday received in his office Iran's ambassador to Jordan and reviewed with him ways for bolstering bilateral cooperation in religious affairs. They also discussed prospects of exchanging visits by ulemas and Muslim scholars and publications. Dr. Abbadi also met Saturday with the head of a Palestinian society organising pilgrimage for Muslims from Palestinian lands occupied since 1948. Arrangements for facilitating the trip to the pilgrims were discussed with the society president.

Omanis begin training course

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the Omani ministry of education has started a training course at the National Centre for Educational Research and Development. The centre director, Victor Al Billeh, said that the Omani officials will learn about the centre's projects which entail controlling and promoting educational programmes for Jordan. He said that the team members will be touring a number of educational institutions.

SSC to open new branches

AMMAN (Petra) — According to an announcement by the Social Security Corporation (SSC), several SSC offices will be opened in the north, south and central parts of Jordan in the coming year. Ali Jaafar, director of the department in charge of the SSC's expansion, said that the new branches were needed to facilitate the corporation's work and take care of compensation, pension, occupational incidents and other matters.

RSCN delegation leaves to Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), led by its director Maher Abu Jaafar, left Saturday for Cairo to take part in a meeting on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. Mr. Abu Jaafar said delegates representing various non-governmental institutions in the Arab World will discuss the formation of pan-Arab bureau on the environment. The delegates to the three-day meeting will review their respective countries' experiments in the protection of the environment.

Ministry of Supply draws up new line for food subsidies

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians with a monthly income of JD 500 will not be entitled to government subsidies for rice, sugar and milk under new regulations expected to go into effect in the new year, officials said Saturday.

The Ministry of Supply is working on a mechanism to ensure that only those in the under-JD 500 monthly-income bracket would be issued coupons for the subsidised food items, the officials told the Jordan Times.

They said the income would be determined on the basis of individual incomes rather than the collective income of the family in the initial stage.

Dr. Fahed Faneh, a noted columnist and economist, said that the effect of the new system will be two-fold. On the one hand, only those under the income level will be entitled to subsidies while on the other the follow-up work involved in receiving coupons after providing necessary documents related to income and other details might discourage many others.

"This would mean that only those in actual need would actually go through the procedure to get the coupons," Dr. Faneh pointed out.

The officials said that the idea of limiting food coupons to certain income brackets and thus ensuring that subsidies reach only those who really deserve the help was mooted in 1991, a few months after the government introduced the coupons.

"It was a difficult process to determine who actually deserves the subsidies, and the formula based on JD 500 monthly individual income appears to be the best starting point," said a senior official.

The government objective has not changed, and it will ensure that the needy among the population continue to get subsidies," the official added.

Each Jordanian adult is entitled to 1.5 kilograms of rice and 1.5 kilograms of sugar every month in addition to one kilogramme of milk powder every three months.

The subsidised rice is available at 150 fils and sugar at 170 fils per kilogramme while the open market price for both items is 360 fils per kilogramme each. One kilogramme of subsidised milk powder is available at JD 1,100 while the market price is JD 1,600.

Jordan used to spend up to JD 60 million per year for food subsidies in the late 1980s. It has gradually brought down the amount by introducing the coupons in 1990.

One of the first measures sought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the economic restructuring programme it prescribed for Jordan was the withdrawal of subsidies.

Jordan resisted IMF pressure and sought instead to reduce spending in other sectors and only gradually cut the subsidies.

Subsidies have been allocated JD 30 million in the fiscal 1994 draft budget compared with JD 36 million for 1993 and JD 43 million in 1992. The bulk of the allocation, however, goes to subsidise wheat to bakeries and households.

Officials declined comment when asked whether the government intended to increase the price of bread in 1994. Reports have indicated that the Ministry of Supply was studying the issue and might introduce an increase during the year.

One of the regular complaints raised by the officials is that there is a heavy wastage of bread in Jordan.

"Many consumers buy bread and feed it to animals since it is cheaper than fodder," said one of the officials.

Jordan now consumes more than 600,000 tonnes of wheat every year compared with 400,000 to 450,000 tonnes three years ago — an increase which is not compatible with the annual population growth as well as the sudden increase in population as a result of the return of more than 300,000 people from the Gulf after the Gulf crisis of 1990-91.

Officials admit that it is very difficult to apply regulatory measures for wheat if only because of the huge consumption and the number of consumers involved. At the same time, they also noted that regulations have kept the price of bread in Jordan the cheapest in the region.

Dr. Faneh said part of the JD 6 million reduction would be saved as a result of the new system for subsidised food.

"One element that is not very clear yet is whether fluctuations in international prices for sugar, rice and milk are reflected in the allocations for subsidies," Dr. Faneh said, pointing out that the government would be reducing its cost if the prices went down.

NGOs urge governments to uphold children's rights

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the title: "Together for the sake of the child," Arab human rights activists Saturday welcomed a call for cooperation with the Arab governments to put the U.N. convention on the rights of the child into operation.

At the start of a two-day seminar on the best methods to promote Arab children's rights and the role which non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should adopt to promote these rights, representatives of different Arab human rights organisations agreed that there should be continuous cooperation and coordination between the governments and the NGOs.

"It is a matter of attitude," said Huda Badran, president of the Cairo-based Arab Women's Association at the opening session of the seminar that was organised by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). "All governments earn to upgrade their (human rights) status... and they won't object to improvements if the approach (by the NGOs) was that of help and not of conflict."

Ms. Badran, who delivered a speech on the need of implementing the convention of the rights of the child in the Arab World, was responding to one of the questions raised in conflicts that exist between governments on the one hand and NGOs on the other.

"There is a clear conflict

between governments and NGOs that we can't ignore," said Egyptian Fawzi Farhali, executive commissioner of Arab Scout Movement. "We need to adopt a stand in which the child has to be separated from the conflict arena."

Amin Mekki from the Cairo-based Arab Lawyers' Union pointed out that "partnership" between governments and NGOs is a difficult task to achieve. The conflict, for example, that exists between a certain government and a minority in that country is going to necessarily influence the rights of the child.

From Iraq, Manal Yunis, president of the General Federation of Iraqi Women, said that the main problem lies in the way in which this coordination can be achieved. "Coordination is possible and is needed because NGOs possess more precise information, are more aware of the issues at stake and are more in touch with the people," Ms. Yunis said. "But it (coordination) is difficult. What we really need is to define a plan of action to follow."

Participants in the first day of the seminar also stressed on the need to address the rights of girls as one of the priorities of the meeting. Some indicated that the discrimination between boys and girls leads to major ills in the society; for example, high illiteracy rate among women more than men. "As much as the discrimination gap narrows between boys

and girls as much as we witness more development and progress in that country," said Ms. Badran. "In Arab countries, discrimination exists since birth is mostly reflected in the parents' preference to educate the boy rather than the girl."

Iraqi children's suffering due to the imposed embargo on the country and its influence on the women and children was also a topic for discussion. Sa'adoun Khalifeh, president of the Family Planning Association in Iraq, pointed out in a working paper to the wretched conditions of Iraqi children and the increasing number of deaths in the past three years.

According to Mr. Khalifeh, the number of deaths among Iraqi children reached 317,583 from 1990 until the end of June this year. "Those who were born after the embargo do not know the taste of sweets... they only hear about them in films and pictures," he said. "There should be a humanitarian effort that would put an end to injustice and cruelty that brought death to the Iraqi children."

UNICEF's regional director, Sarojini Vittalabi expressed hope that coordination and cooperation would be strengthened among governments, NGOs and the people to "monitor and implement human rights goals," and that the role of NGOs should be a complementary one to the government rather than confrontational.

Jordan, India boost trade links

AMMAN (Petra) — India is to organise an industrial fair in Amman in September or October of 1994 in order to display samples of its manufactured products to the Jordanian public, according to Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary-General Marwan Awad. Mr. Awad made the statement upon his return to Amman from a visit to India where he led the Jordanian side to the joint Jordanian-Indian economic committee which discussed boosting economic and trade links between the two countries.

India will buy aluminium fluoride and will boost its imports of fertilizers from Jordan to 1.5 million tonnes and of potash to 500,000 tonnes, up from 350,000 annually, said Mr. Awad.

In return, Jordan has agreed to facilitate and encourage Jordan's imports of Indian products especially rice, fresh and frozen meat, wheat, sorghum and engineering equipment at current world prices, said Mr. Awad.

He said that the two sides also agreed that private sector businessmen from Jordan and India should meet in the second half of the coming year to discuss prospects of cooperation in industrial fields and in launching joint economic ventures based on India's experiences in small and medium size industries.

Al Quds Open University denies sale report

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A committee representing the workers of the Amman-based Al Quds Open University (QOU) has denied earlier reports alleging that the university is being sold to Ahmad Tamimi, an Arab-American living in the United States, and stressed that QOU could remain as a Palestinian entity contributing to the educational objectives of the Palestinian people.

"Dr. Tamimi has reached a contract with QOU to buy its programmes which he can later market to Arab communities living in America," according to committee chairman Khaled Asanien. He told the Jordan Times, which had published the earlier report, that sale of the university has never been contemplated and that this week's two sit in staged by some 80 QOU workers "was aimed primarily at urging the Palestinian leadership and the world community to help the university serve its status and pursue its noble mission."

"We have reason to believe that the financial and other problems facing the university are on the way towards a satis-

factory solution," said Mr. Hassanien in an interview, but he declined to elaborate.

The workers, who staged the protest Tuesday, issued a statement noting that QOU, which has been providing distance education to 4,000 Palestinian students, was facing the consequences of a financial suspension of Arab and international aid since the Gulf war.

The crisis, said the statement, deprived the workers of their salaries for more than five months, denied the freelance teachers their pay, caused protraction of programmes to cease, prevented QOU from opening branches in Arab states, halted Jordan Television educational programmes beamed to Palestinian students and led to the resignation of many QOU teachers.

The statement, a copy of which was handed to the Jordan Times, noted that the workers and their families were facing a difficult time while the students future hung in balance.

It said that a memorandum listing the grievances have been sent to Palestine President Yasser Arafat urging him to give priority to finding sufficient funds for QOU programmes and pay workers their salaries. The memorandum

appealed to wealthy Palestinians and the European Community to extend aid to QOU and urged the Gulf states to release frozen funds allocated for QOU.

The QOU project, which was launched in 1985, was in response to a real need for higher education among the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the diaspora. At the request of the Palestine National Fund (PNF) and with assistance from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, UNESCO completed the project's feasibility study in 1980 and QOU was inaugurated in late 1985.

QOU has been preparing multi-media distance education learning materials designed by academic staff and assisted by experts from local universities and from distance education institutions in other nations.

QOU, the only distance education university in the Arab World, was primarily established to serve the Palestinian students but, once resources and circumstances permitted, there were plans for enrollments from other Arab countries.

However, the current financial strait has temporarily halted expansion plans.

Israel, PLO meet in Oslo

(Continued from page 1)

tain full responsibility but would allow a symbolic Palestinian presence.

Israel warned on Friday there would be no agreement to implement Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and

Jericho before 1994.

The Oslo meeting was arranged after Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst contacted Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat when the two leaders failed to break the autonomy deadlock in

Cairo. Mr. Egeland said.

The United States and Russia, the co-sponsors of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, also asked Norway to arrange a new meeting between Israel and the PLO. Mr. Egeland said.

Mr. Egeland said the talks would focus formally on crea-

tion of a Palestinian police force.

The PLO representative in Norway had said on Friday night that Mr. Peres would lead the Israeli delegation and Mahmoud Abbas would head the PLO delegation.

But Mr. Egeland, one of the Norwegians who helped to

broker the PLO-Israeli accord in secret talks in Norway this year, said in an interview with NRK state radio: "I have no reason to believe that Peres will attend."

Mr. Egeland said Israel, the PLO, the United States and Russia had asked Norway to host the talks.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition artist Hama Al Dasouqi at the Student Affairs Deanship at the University of Yarmouk in Irbid.
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Ibrahim Al Abduli and Abdul Hussein Twaiz at Alla Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ali Al Sabounji at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art 93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists Khaled Hijazi, Mohammad Al Ameri, and Adnan Al Sharif at Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hani Al Hourani entitled "Impressions from Wadi Al Wala" at Bahadna Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Samia Zaron at the Open Studio "Al Marsam Al Maftah," Jabal Amman, 2nd Circle (9:00-13:00 and 15:00-17:00 all days except Fridays).
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrelnissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Funn of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by a number of Iraqi artists at La Casa Art Gallery (between the 5th and 6th Circles).

CHRISTMAS BAZAARS

- ★ Christmas bazaar at Al Nakhbah Exhibition Hall, University Road (Tel. 837304, 684257).
- ★ Christmas bazaar at the Orthodox Club in Abdoun.
- ★ Christmas bazaar at the Amman International Auto Exhibition/Airport Road.
- ★ Christmas bazaar by Jordan River Designs at Regency Palace Hotel (10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.) (Tel. 656872).

DRAMAS

- ★ Drama entitled "Family Dispute" at the "Drama Theatre" at Yarmouk University at 12:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Haunting crossing points

OF ALL the disputes that arose between the PLO and Israel in the wake of their Sept. 13 accord on interim self-rule, the control over border crossings between Jericho and Jordan, on the one hand, and between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, on the other, may prove to be the most difficult. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is showing insensitivity to the request of the Palestinian side to exercise meaningful supervision of border points in the Jericho enclave and Gaza due to his well-known obsession with security for his country. It is of course possible that the Israeli prime minister is exhibiting toughness and inflexibility just for the sake of domestic political reasons. But the cycle of violence that surged in the wake of the Palestinian-Israeli deal has, no doubt, also complicated matters for the two sides.

The Palestinians' view is totally different from Rabin's since their control over border crossings is the least acceptable manifestation of any semblance of sovereignty over the small territories that Israel has agreed to yield to them on the basis of the Gaza-Jericho first formula. Otherwise, these tiny areas would become mere enclaves surrounded by Israeli soldiers with no apparent freedom to go one inch beyond the dictates of the Israeli military regime. Small wonder then that Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij lamented the failure of the Rabin government to give the PLO effective supervision over the border points and described the situation without such an Israeli concession as untenable for and an enslavement of his people.

Given the diametrically opposed perspectives on this thorny issue, there is a growing fear that all the accomplishments of the past three months on the Palestinian-Israeli front could unravel. From the looks of things, Rabin is not likely to budge on this matter. Likewise, PLO leader Yasser Arafat cannot afford to appear as having made yet another big concession to Israel at a time when he is already beleaguered and injured due to his signature of the Sept. 13 agreement. Two possible scenarios are left for the two parties to contemplate: Either to reach a deadlock, which is in neither party's interest, or accept a reasonable compromise that would leave both camps with some sort of coordinated control over the border crossings during the envisaged interim period. As long as what is sought for the time being is a temporary resolution of the problem, till there is final settlement of the Palestinian question, the latter option would appear the lesser evil. With this understanding in mind, the entire peace package already attained between the PLO and the Rabin government must not be allowed to slip away. There are very high stakes in the September peace accord and an important issue as the border issue should be temporarily resolved for the sake of the higher objectives of lasting peace in the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Saturday called on the Arab negotiators with Israel to re-consider the whole Middle East process because it is clear now that from its stand with regard to the Oslo deal with the PLO the Israelis are seeking to gain more time and win the world community's support for their policies which are hostile to the interests of the Arab World. Of course, the PLO leadership is to blame for signing documents considered as incomplete, ambiguous and unclear, thus opening the way for a different interpretation by the Rabin government, said the paper. It is to be regretted now that some of us have trusted the Israeli intentions and confided in the United States which served as a guarantor of the PLO-Israeli deal regarding the Gaza-Jericho first option, continued the paper. It is now clear for all that the Rabin government is striving to embarrass the PLO leadership, which can not draw back from the Oslo deal and for which it is impossible to give more concessions to the Israelis in view of the strong internal Palestinian opposition, the paper added. It seems that Israel is continuing the drive to reduce to a minimum the Palestinian gains so that it can guarantee that the autonomy rule remains an easy prey for the Israeli government and easy to control and contain, added the daily. It said that there is no alternative for the PLO leadership but to turn back to the Arab World for backing, to enable it to handle the Israeli manoeuvres and coordinate all its steps with those of other Arab parties to the peace process.

MERE TALK about a teachers' association in Jordan can by no means satisfy the teachers' needs or convince them that the government or Parliament are taking steps to help safeguard their interests, said a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. For the past three years, the teachers have been struggling to set up a union to help protect their interests and help them improve their salaries and working conditions, said Bader Abdul Haq. The reply to all this was the creation of the so-called Teachers' Club and promises by Parliament that it would work out a set of regulations helping the teachers to establish their union, said the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

How to survive Israeli competition

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Normalisation of economic relations with Israel is definitely coming. It will be one of the conditions for peace between Israel and any Arab country. Therefore, we should find out whether the Jordanian industry is able to survive the competition of the Israeli industrial products or whether it will shrink and be crowded out of its markets by the Israeli industry.

To answer this crucial question we should first state four obvious facts:
First is that Israel is an industrial country and belongs to the "first world" while Jordan is a developing country of the Third World. As a rule, the manufactured products of developing countries are not able to compete on equal footing with the products of the industrialised countries without protection.
Second is the fact that the Jordanian industries are not able to stand competition of foreign imports in the domestic market. That is why the Jordanian infant industry was given a customs protection of 30 per cent as a minimum and 50 per cent as a maximum. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) which is known to advocate free trade, recognised this fact and admitted that the above level of protection is justified in order for the Jordanian industry to survive.

Third is the fact that the Israeli economy is heavily subsidised. In fact, it is by far the most subsidised economy in the world. Israel receives unrequited transfers of around \$6 billion a year from various sources, prominent among whom are America and Germany. The competition between the two economies is therefore unfair.

Fourth is the fact that Israel proved during the 45 years since its inception that it is not a normal state with defined boundaries. It is rather an expansionist Zionist project. Strengthening the Israeli economy may tempt Israel to enter another round of geographic expansion bid at the expense of Arab land, either through wars or by other means.

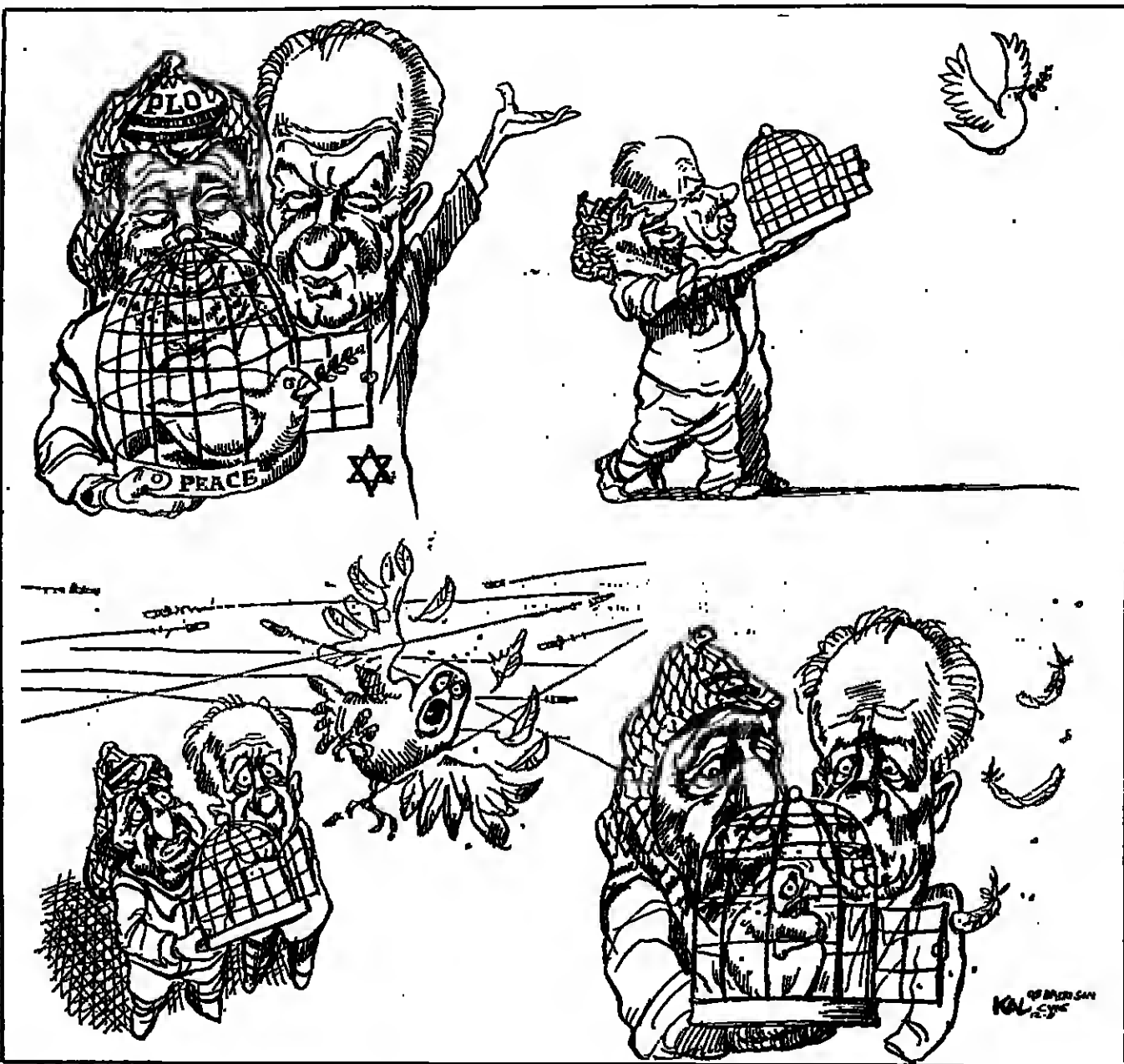
We have no reason to volunteer to strengthen the Israeli economy and enhance its economic base until Israeli rulers prove through action not words that they have abandoned expansionary designs and converted Israel into a normal peaceful state with recognised borders, just like the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was required to abandon its charter calling for the dismantling of Israel.

If Israel needed five years of transitional period to test the intentions and good will of the Palestinians, we need the same period to make sure that Israel is no more a security threat.

These facts do not only imply the answer, they also indicate the remedy. The Jordanian industry is unable to stand the competition of the Israeli industry without protection. The remedy is to apply the custom protection measures, now in force towards all foreign imports, without giving Israeli exports any extra advantage over the imports from other trade partners, such as Germany, Japan, U.S., Turkey etc. Normalisation of economic relations should mean treating Israel like any other foreign country without discrimination: No free trade area, no common market and no custom union.

Jordan should not wait until after an accord is reached with Israel. Customs posts should be installed immediately on the bridges. The bridges must be treated as an international border point, just like our borders with Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, as far as customs and passports are concerned. This step is overdue. Any hesitation or delay will be at the expense of Jordan's national interests.

Jordan, as a sovereign state, should assert its authority on the bridges and put an end to the current situation, where Israel has been deciding, unilaterally, what is permitted and what is not to cross, and in what direction when it comes to the movement of people and goods for the last 26 years.



The violence among us

By Bernd Häppner

Violence and acts of brutality are going on in every corner of the world at this moment. Wars and civil wars that no one seems to have the power or determination to stop — in the former Yugoslavia, in Georgia and Azerbaijan, in Northern Ireland, in Nigeria — continue unabated. And what might be called "undeclared wars" in our cities, from Los Angeles to Johannesburg, also spiral out of control.

I do not have a solution to this pervasive manifestation of violence. But it seems to me that if we frame our idea of violence as an aberration, a deviation from the path of normality, we are making a profound error. We run the risk of unwittingly justifying neglect of whole segments of society while ignoring the increasing power of violence generated by society itself, which in modern life increasingly seems to isolate and brutalise the individual. We cannot hope to solve the problem of escalating violence until we have redefined the concept of violence and changed our perception of it.

Recent scholarship suggests that the world has never seen a region or a period without violence. In all previous cultures it appears to have been accepted as part of a natural or God-given order. Violent acts were endemic and normal.

In the 18th century, with the industrial and political revolutions and the emancipation of the individual, perceptions changed: the Enlightenment "denaturalised" violence. It became unacceptable in society, and as it could not be justified before the court of reason, the objective of a society free from violence began to

emerge. People began to speak of a utopia: a civilised society (to use Kant's phrase) in eternal peace.

But this denaturalisation of violence required a new concept of "legitimate" violence. The end of its natural history led to the emancipation of violence from mythical and religious significance. Violence was turned into a means; it was freed from traditional limits, and, now defined as a response to unlawful rule and domination, it was justified even before the court of reason.

This legitimisation of violence produced not only the "other" — the perpetrator of "bad" violence — but gave rise to the pervasive forms of violence we think of as characteristic of modern life. This ubiquitous aggression, which we may experience at home, in a factory or at school, has been called structural violence.

By the end of the 19th century, production had become conflated with destruction, and the economies of industrial societies were increasingly based on the destruction of landscapes, lives and property. Technology provided the pattern not only for economic progress but also modern warfare. Consider typical photographs from World War I. With the proud gestures of factory owners or of merchants in front of their stores, German officers posed on huge piles of rubble. Standing on the ruins of blown-up houses and forts, these officers demonstrated to the viewer the astounding success of modern armaments, made possible with the latest technological innovations.

At the same time, we find it psychologically difficult to accept that violence is the product of our own making. The disbelief that wars and brutal

acts are still possible in our world is part of our distress when reading the news about violence in Yugoslavia, Somalia or the far side of our town.

As long as we maintain the concept of western history as one of a civilisation moving from barbaric violence to rationality and peace, open and brutal violence is perceived as part of another world — one that was once beyond the northern border of Greece, where the barbarians lived, and is now beyond the border of our own civilisation or the walls of our own home, where the others live.

These others are distanced by space and time. They are societies of the East or the South, people in the poor and uneducated quarters of our cities. From this perspective, violence becomes an intruder from an outer sphere and is present in our world by default, as an exception, a deplorable relic in an otherwise civilised system.

But is there really a difference between a sniper taking aim above a Sarajevo street and a frustrated worker in Detroit who pulls his gun, between looting an aid convoy in Mogadishu and drug dealing in affluent quarters of New York, between a rape here and a rape there? The dividing line we like to draw between ourselves and those who we fear is an illusion: violence is as much a part of each of us as it is of our society.

As long as we hold the view that violence belongs to times and places that are not ours, or to early childhood before we are properly socialised, we are victims of a perception incongruous with the reality in which we live. Our idea of modernity — and as a result, our perception of ourselves and our world

— could turn out to be untenable.

To abandon the idea that western civilisation is en route to a world of peace does harm to our pride, but we must take a sceptical view of the possibility of eradicating war and violence. Yet accepting that the world will not be free from violence is not the same as accepting violence. Paradoxically, letting go of the ideal of eternal peace may increase our ability to make peace.

"The Israelis and the Palestinian peoples who fought each other for almost a century have agreed to move decisively on the path of dialogue, understanding and cooperation.... I want to tell the Palestinian delegation that we are sincere, that we mean business.... We will need more courage and determination to continue the course of building co-existence and peace between us.... Such a shift will give us an opportunity to embark upon the process of economic, social and cultural growth and development."

These statements, the first by Shimon Peres and the second by Yasser Arafat, made at the signing of the Middle East pact on Sept. 13, were concrete and practical; they did not refer to a vision of a world free from violence and war.

It is not the time now to echo the grand vision of human perfectibility and historical progression. The end of the utopian ideal of eternal peace should not only be interpreted as a loss but also as an act of liberation. It is time that new insights into the violence structure of our psyches and of modern society be turned to committing concrete and localised acts of peace — The New York Times.

Dynamics of peace — give and take which could bring conciliation

By Michael Jansen

THE POSTPONEMENT from Dec. 12 to Dec. 22-23 and then the postponement for at least "three weeks", in the estimate of Israeli officials, of the signing of an agreement between the PLO and Israel on implementation of the Declaration of Principles negotiated in Oslo and signed in Washington on Sept. 13 has more to do with traditional Zionist/Israeli claims to the "land" of Palestine than the preservation of "Israeli survival" and "Israeli security".

Israel is, and has been for three decades, the predominant military power in the Middle East. Its "survival", therefore, has not been a real issue since the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, and even then the fledgling Jewish state was not fighting for its existence from a position of weakness vis-a-vis its Arab neighbours but from a position of strength.

But because Israelis define the "security" of their state as the ability of Israeli military and police forces to guarantee the safety of all Jews living within the territories Israel controls, Israeli leaders claim that the "security of the Jewish state is under threat" if Jews are being threatened, assaulted and killed by Palestinians. And this threat provides an excuse for postponement.

ing over territory to the Palestinians means a renunciation of sovereignty over such territory.

The second aspect is the size of the Jericho enclave. This also involves sovereignty. Israel is prepared to cede the Jericho municipality and the neighbouring, largely empty, refugee camps amounting to 35 square kilometres of territory. But the PLO demands the handover of the entire Jericho subdistrict, defined during the British mandate, of some 350 square kilometres. A Palestinian entity in the West Bank comprising 350 square kilometres could claim the attribute of sovereignty while a city enclave of only 35 square kilometres could not.

The third aspect is control over roads used by Jewish settlers in both the West Bank and Gaza and the fourth is the Israeli army's right of pursuit of Palestinian activists into Palestinian-held areas after the Israeli withdrawal. Both involve sovereignty.

The other issue which causes Israel problems in the negotiations with the PLO is the problem of defining boundaries, deciding where Israel begins and ends. Since the Versailles Peace conference in 1919, at which the Zionists presented maps of their future state, they have been extremely reluctant to delineate the precise bound-

"The Israelis have not yet realised that the Arabs' price for peace is return of land the Israelis cannot imagine themselves relinquishing. They continue to believe that they can make a deal without giving up control and sovereignty over 'The Land'. This is why on Dec. 13 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to make a conciliatory or compensatory gesture towards the Palestinians in order to maintain momentum in the peace process. He and his colleagues still do not understand the dynamics of peacemaking, the process of give and take which would bring peace and conciliation."

The method of defining threat — and regarding security — masks an historical Zionist/Israeli mind-set on the issue of "the land of Israel" which governs the thinking of a majority of Israelis and the key figures in the present Labour-led coalition. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres belong to the independence generation of Israeli leaders for whom "land" acquired by Jews became inalienably "Jewish", holy "land" promised the Jews by their tribal God, Yahweh.

There is a solid psychological barrier in the minds of such men to handing over any land, even one inch of land, to the Palestinians. So they, following in the footsteps of the nationalist camp led by the Likud, can be expected to resist for as long as possible the transfer of control over territory, any portion of the land to the PLO.

There are a number of aspects to control, all of which involve sovereignty. The person who pointed out this fact was Shulamit Aloni, head of the Meretz Party, the most concessionist faction in the present Israeli coalition. And even she was not prepared to grant the PLO "sovereignty" over any portion of the land which Israel claims.

The first aspect is control of the crossing points from the neighbouring Arab countries into Gaza and the West Bank. Israel says it should retain control, citing the agreement at Oslo that Israel should be in charge of external security. The PLO, however, says that Israel should not be in a position to open and close the doors to the territories. Therefore, there should be joint Israeli, PLO and international control. Israel has rejected this idea because it wants to use its control of the frontiers of the territories through the stationing of forces along those frontiers to maintain its sovereignty over those territories.

Israeli spokesmen make their intentions crystal clear when they say that they must decide who enters Israel through the crossing points. The Israelis have not yet got it into their heads that hand-

aries of that state. And to complicate matters, various political parties have laid claim to different tracts of territory. Thus, the dominant Herut faction of the Likud claims the East as well as the West Bank of the Jordan and Lebanese territory containing the headwaters of the Jordan River while ideologues of the right-wing Tehiya Party, which had ministerial posts in the last Likud government, would like to reconquer Sinai.

One of the founding fathers of the Jewish state, Norman Bentwich, said that the borders of Israel should be like the skin of an animal which expands in times of plenty and shrinks in times of want. Any handover of territory to the Palestinians signifies not only shrinkage but an eventual drawing of boundaries limiting the expansion of the skin of the Jewish state and challenging the mind-set of the majority of Israelis and their leaders.

The Israelis have not yet realised that the Arabs' price for peace is return of land the Israelis cannot imagine themselves relinquishing. They continue to believe that they can make a deal without giving up control and sovereignty over "The Land". This is why on Dec. 13 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to make a conciliatory or compensatory gesture towards the Palestinians — by releasing prisoners or making a token withdrawal — in order to maintain the momentum in the peace process. He and his colleagues still do not understand the dynamics of peacemaking, the process of give and take which could bring peace and conciliation.

And Israel's refusal to come to terms and act in accordance with what can be called the "spirit" of making peace cannot but have a negative impact on negotiations between the Jewish state and its other Arab interlocutors. Prevarication and procrastination do not create a climate of confidence. As the Palestinian problem is the core of the Arab dispute with Israel, lack of progress on the Palestinian track could mean stalemate on the other three tracks in the negotiations.

مركز الصحافة

Features

Conservation of architectural heritage is a duty for all

By Samer G. Bagaean

AMMAN — The symposium on the Conservation of Architectural Heritage in Jordan and the Arab World concluded, Nov. 24, at the University of Jordan's Department of Architecture and Technology Faculty.

The papers that were presented, encompassing both national and international expertise and experience, have raised issues that are of interest not only to architects, but also to sociologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and economists. The role societies play

in processes such as conservation as a social development process were cited with reference to particular international experiences.

The introductory paper scrutinised the criteria by which sites were selected for inclusion on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Other papers examined the urban aspects of conservation at the neighbourhood and city levels.

Another theme was the subject of symbols or abstracting the traditional language of design into modernist design traditions. The relationships and interactions between conservation and tourism, labeled "toy-town syndrome" and "en-

agement in voyeurism" were also pondered upon and debated.

The subject of public interaction with either conservation or preservation was raised over and over again by many of the speakers. Questions raised included: How can people — the public — be aware of heritage and conservation and contribute to the debate when the forums through which they can express either pleasure or displeasure with their built environment do not exist? or Why is it that where these forums exist, they are not easily accessible?

Decentralisation of decision-making processes in our cities

and the adoption of flexible visions for future urban expansion instead of an inflexible master plan were proposed as the alternative vision. This new vision also promises to chart future progress within the social and economic domains that will supplement this future expansion.

But what should the role of the architect be in this new managerial structure that proposes to deal with archaeological, urban and rural conservation?

One of the symposium's recommendations suggested that the architect be subsumed into a proposed council for the protection of heritage, a trust en-

trusted with the task of coordinating between the numerous ministries, agencies and institutions that are concerned with conservation.

It was also proposed that this council include politicians, anthropologists, economists, archaeologists and sociologists so as to have the authority to enforce any recommendations or proposals that it might want to.

I believe that if we can have all these professionals working together and with representatives of the public, maybe community-based organisations, then we would be on the right track towards making conservation beneficial to all.

'American interest in Islam growing'

By Rosalind M. d'ine Murphy

WASHINGTON — Interest in learning more about Islam and the Muslim community is growing in the United States, two advocates of interfaith relations said December 13. This interest, they say, has been spawned by heightened awareness of the need for understanding and dialogue among religious groups in America.

Mustafa Malik, director of research for the American Muslim Council, and Stephen Gell, a member of the board of directors of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, discussed interfaith tolerance during a WorldNet television dialogue with participants in Abu Dhabi, Beirut and Riyadh. Arab participants included journalists and government officials.

While a lack of understanding of Islam and the Muslim community persists in the United States, "great progress" is being made to reverse the problem of intolerance. "Awareness among Christians, Jews and Muslims to do something about it (intolerance) is much greater today," Mr. Malik stressed. Problem recognition, in turn, has stimulated wider interest in Islam and increased interfaith dialogue, both he and Mr. Gell noted.

This "tremendous amount of inquisitiveness," according to Mr. Malik, is reflected in the daily inquiries he receives from U.S. media seeking facts on the Muslim community and Islam. Mr. Gell noted that his National Conference has set up a telephone hot-line for the media to get accurate facts on different religions, including Islam.

For Mr. Gell, education is the key. "It is important for Americans to understand" Koranic teachings and Islam's "basis of religious tolerance," he said. Therefore, "much more has to be done" to educate Americans about the Muslim community, especially through "promoting interfaith dialogue... the more Muslims can interact with the general community... the more Americans will understand" them.

Founded in 1990, the American Muslim Council works to promote interfaith relations and combat prejudice against the Muslim community in the United States, Mr. Malik said. He added that the AMC also works to promote human rights and democracy throughout the Muslim world, an activity he emphasised during the WorldNet programme.

"Islam is a very tolerant religion, but that is not what we are actively doing in Muslim countries," Mr. Malik said. There ought to be "greater intra-tolerance" among Muslims in the United States and throughout the Muslim world, he added. Muslims ought to discuss problems in the community "among ourselves and through democratic means... (we) must be prepared to look hard at ourselves — then we will be able to relate to others in a more informed manner."

The National Conference of Christians and Jews, founded in 1927, works to promote a greater understanding in the United States of different religions and cultures, Mr. Gell said. He noted that the name of the conference is no longer accurate in that the organiza-

tion is "open to people of all religious, cultural and racial backgrounds."

"Unless we show that kind of diversity ourselves, we can't hope to be credible when we teach diversity to other people," he said.

Participants in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the UAE raised the issue of President Clinton's recent meeting with British author Salman Rushdie in the context of interfaith understanding. (Rushdie is under an Iranian death sentence for blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses.")

In Defence of the White House decision, Mr. Gell said the U.S. remains "open to a wide variety of views... no matter how hurtful those views may be seen by some groups." The issue of free speech "plays strongly in American society," he stressed, and is "guaranteed by the First Amendment" of the U.S. Constitution. In meeting with Mr. Rushdie, the president was, in effect "speaking for Americans in espousing the view of free speech," Mr. Gell asserted.

This view of free speech may "not be seen the same way in other parts of the world," Mr. Gell noted, so it is important for Americans "to be sensitive to other groups." Americans have a "difficult time recollecting a letter to President Mr. Clinton criticising his meeting with Mr. Rushdie. He stressed, however, that the organisation defends the principle of freedom of speech as guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution: "We won't protest (against Mr. Rushdie's) publishing house, and (we) don't agree with (Ayatollah) Khomeini's death sentence." — United States Information Agency.

1993: An historic breakthrough toward peace in N. Ireland

By Allen Nacheman
Agence France Presse

LONDON — Britain's admission in late November that it had, contrary to all public vows, been secretly dealing with the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) for most of 1993 hit like a thunderbolt. It forced Prime Minister John Major to eat the words he had uttered with indignation in the House of Commons only weeks earlier, that talking with the IRA "would turn my stomach."

It also kicked up seething denunciation from all directions and for a time appeared to cancel all bets and put the Ulster peace process back to square one.

But as the dust settled and the year wound down, there were signs that the seeds of an historic breakthrough in ending a quarter-century of sectarian bloodshed in Northern Ireland had been sown.

Northern Ireland Secretary Patrick Mayhew, despite acrid exchanges with the IRA's Sinn Féin political wing over revelations of the secret exchanges, made an unprecedented offer in the House of Commons: If the IRA "unequivocally" renounces violence, "exploratory" talks could begin the first week in January.

The revelation of secret IRA contacts nearly scuttled London's peace talks with Dublin, which under the 1985 Anglo-Irish accord was entitled to a say in any dealings concerning Northern Ireland.

Irish Premier Albert Reynolds was infuriated at

having been kept in the dark about the IRA talks, and worse, at learning that London had been passing information about their own private meetings on to the IRA.

Deep wounds festered between the Catholic IRA and London, between London and Dublin, between London and the majority Protestant Unionists who fear Britain will loosen its claim on Northern Ireland.

But as Christmas approached, there was an almost palpable sense that, with the secret out of the bag, some terrible yoke had been lifted that would allow peace talks to shift into a higher gear.

After a quarter-century of sectarian warfare that killed more than 3,100, injured 35,000 and left a gentle, pastoral land torn asunder, peace seemed finally in sight.

The year produced a high and a low in the Northern Ireland conflict: the single bloodiest month in 17 years — 28 dead in October — and the first proof the government was dealing with those it termed "terrorists."

"The disclosure puts positions out in the open and they become part of the political process," said Ulster University political-science Professor Paul Arthur.

The realities were more complex. With everything out in the open, Mr. Major found himself walking a tightrope, viewed with suspicion by Catholics, Protestants and the Dublin government alike.

The IRA and the government traded insults and accusations, posturing for the public relations high ground, each claiming the other had initiated the secret talks.

Ian Paisley, fiery head of Ulster's Democratic Unionist Party, condemned the government for dealing with the IRA, and was expelled from the House of Commons when he called Mr. Mayhew a "liar" for having denied the contacts.

The more moderate James Molyneux, with whose Ulster Unionist Party Mr. Major was forced to strike an alliance last summer when he needed their nine votes to pass the Maastricht treaty on European union, was holding his fire.

The loose cannon in the scenario was the IRA's Protestant counterparts, the Paramilitary Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

Smaller and not as well armed as the IRA, the UFF and UVF were reportedly recruiting heavily and smuggling in more weapons as a hedge against an eventual British pullout.

Some blamed the backlash on London's talks with the IRA.

"People are coming to realise that the only language the British government understands is violence," said Belfast Ulster Unionist councillor Jim Rodgers.

"The Unionist community has seen how the IRA wins concessions from the British government through violence," said Peter Robinson,



another Unionist hardliner. "So it's understandable that some people are turning to violence to defend the union. If they believe that the British are about to abandon them, you can expect more violence."

The Irish premier, despite his initial bitterness, has held two meetings with Mr. Major, the latest one during Friday's E.C. summit meeting in Brussels.

Officials said the two would meet again, possibly next week in London, and Irish diplomats suggested some elements of a peace plan might be announced.

But the two sides went out of their way Friday to warn against raising false hopes. Mr. Reynolds said that although another meeting was planned, "I am not saying I can have a finalised peace initiative before Christmas. There are still differences to be overcome."

A senior British official said the talks Friday were "quite good and we made more progress... I hope — it is by no means a certainty — I hope we can reach a successful conclusion between now and Christmas," said the official.

The government has much at stake. It keeps some 19,000 troops in Northern Ireland, spends some \$3 billion a year there and still must contend with IRA attacks on the mainland that keep the British on tenterhooks.

"The truth is that in England, Scotland and Wales only a politically insignificant minority cares a fig about the future of Northern Ireland," said the Independent on Sunday.

"People want an end to wrecked shopping centres and maimed children, an end to security alerts and bag searches, an end to the sheer tedium of hearing and reading about it."

Politics muddy efforts to save dolphins

By Penelope Hocking-Vigie
Reuters

ANTIBES, France — Red tape and politics are hampering efforts to save thousands of Mediterranean dolphins that die each year in lethal drift-nets.

Made of nylon of the same density as water, the huge nets used for tuna fishing cannot be detected by the dolphins' sensory system and an estimated 8,000 are trapped every year.

France, Italy and Monaco promised a year ago to set up a 73,000 square kilometres sanctuary in the western Mediterranean to protect the graceful marine mammals.

Political considerations, bureaucracy and lack of money have prevented their "declaration of intent" from being implemented.

Experts from the seven western Mediterranean countries — France, Monaco, Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco — met recently in the French Riviera resort of Antibes to discuss how to turn good intentions into reality.

The seminar was organised by the Antibes-based Association for the creation of an international Maritime Reserve in the Western Mediterranean (RIMMO) whose first international conference in October last year called for the sanctuary.

RIMMO says about five per cent of the Mediterranean dolphin population — as well as whales and turtles — dies in the nets every year.

The proposed sanctuary would be bounded by the French Riviera, Italy's Ligure coast and Corsica. However, the signatory countries lack the legislation necessary to police it.

As international law stands, the ban on drift-nets applies only to their own fishermen. "Beyond the 12-mile territorial limit, the high seas are a no-man's land. There is no protection for fauna in over 80 per cent of the western Mediterranean," said RIMMO's English-born President Mike Riddell.

The 1982 United Nations convention on sea rights, due to come into effect next year, allows states an exclusive economic zone stretching 200 miles from shore, with powers to preserve biological resources and protect the environment.

"The ideal solution would be to divide up the Mediterranean into 200-mile zones," Mr. Riddell said. "But the 18 countries concerned cannot find an agreement which pleases everyone."

Law Professor Alain Piquemal, chairman of the seminar's Legal Committee, said the Mediterranean was too small for each country to claim a 200-mile zone.

"There are too many conflicting interests, and there would be almost no high seas left," he said.

He said the sanctuary declaration had little legal force and the signatories could use

sections of the U.S. convention to support a treaty banning drift-net fishing within the sanctuary.

The European Community imposes a maximum net length of 2.5 kilometres on member states but an increasing number of Asian boats — mainly Japanese and South Korean — are attracted as much by tuna as by legal loopholes and use huge nets.

"It's particularly absurd since they've banned drift-net fishing in their own waters," Mr. Riddell said.

Four Asian tuna trawlers were seen deploying more than 100 kilometres of drift-nets near Sardinia last summer while the captain of a French navy vessel looked on helplessly.

To persuade political leaders they need to act quickly, scientists must gather information on the numbers of animals concerned. But they lack the money to conduct effective surveys.

"They have to hitch rides on car ferries or pay for rented boats by taking on board 'ecological tourists'. This restricts most of their survey work to summer months and coastal areas."

To enable year-round observation, RIMMO will equip a boat for use by the seven countries present at the seminar.

As the unwieldy political and legal machinery rumbles on, the graceful dolphins continue to end up in drift-nets.

makes a sharp distinction between this party as such and the Islamist movement in which it had its roots." APS said, citing sources close to the commission.

"One should not lose sight of the fact that many ex-FIS militants are not terrorists and condemn violence," APS added.

The ex-FIS militants and those in the Islamist movement who found themselves within this organisation thus have as much right as anyone else to participate in the dialogue."

An Algiers court in March 1992 hanged the FIS.

Algerian presidency

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kehir also demanded the lifting of laws passed during nearly two years of emergency rule, setting up a consultative group of government and opposition members, trying those responsible for repression against the opposition, and talks with the FIS in a neutral venue.

Over the last month the authorities have hinted they were willing to include FIS people or those close to the party in talks to chart Algeria's path to

democracy, detailed when the election was cancelled.

The official APS news agency appeared to exclude direct talks with the FIS but was open to the possibility of talks with its supporters.

It said anyone who accepted certain principles, including the commitment to alternating power and to the republican character of the state, could take part in talks.

Regarding the FIS's specific case, the National Dialogue Commission has made clear it

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ADDENDUM (1)
JPMC hereby announces that the closing date for submission of bids has been extended until 14:00 hours local time Tuesday, Jan. 25, 1994.
Sameh Madani
Managing Director

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(FOR THE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT, ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENTATION & CONTROL SYSTEMS FOR PERMANENT WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM AT ESHIDIYA MINE PROJECT).

ADDENDUM (1)
JPMC hereby announces that the closing date for submission of bids has been extended until 14:00 hours local time Monday, Feb. 7, 1994.
Sameh Madani
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Asia, Middle East focus of S. African tourism drive

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa, emerging from decades of apartheid isolation, is turning to the Middle East, Asia and other African countries to bolster the fortunes of its post-sanctions tourism industry.

But more emphasis needed to be placed on levels of service and personal safety which the South African Tourist Board said were "still not viewed in a positive light by the majority of tourists."

"Visitors today accept that when you travel to many countries it can be a fairly hazardous exercise... violence here is largely concentrated in areas not frequented by tourists," board executive director Spencer Thomas told Reuters.

"White visitors are not (usually) mugged or attacked they felt a sense of unease," Mr. Thomas said.

Despite the violence, the numbers of foreign visitors rose by more than 10 per cent in the first nine months of the year, compared to the same period in 1992, the board said.

And while the number of visitors from traditional markets including Britain, Israel and Holland rose only slightly

or declined in the same period, the numbers from India soared by over 47 per cent.

The numbers of visitors from Zambia, once one of "white" South Africa's most vociferous foes, increased by 38 per cent.

"As a result of the imminent new political dispensation in South Africa, there has been an encouraging increase in the number of visitors to the country," said tourism board chairman Piet Van Hoven, referring to next April's universal franchise election ending more than three centuries of white domination.

Mr. Van Hoven said the numbers of visitors from other African states were expected to rise in the short term as "South Africa now plays an increasingly important role in the continent in terms of trade and technology."

He said it was board's policy to encourage people in Africa "to look south" for shopping, medical attention and study opportunities.

Nick Stathakis, director for Africa and new markets, said the board was determined to exploit new markets made possible by the recent increase in the numbers of foreign air-

lines flying into South Africa. Seventeen African airlines now fly into Johannesburg and links have recently been established with the Gulf states, India, Pakistan and Middle Eastern and Asian countries.

"I have already visited several new markets, including the United Arab Emirates, Cyprus, Kenya, Tunisia and Zambia. I will also visit India in the near future," said Mr. Stathakis.

Figures just released by the board showed the numbers of business visitors rose by more than 23 per cent in the January to September period over 1992.

The board said markets showing exceptional growth included Germany, the United States, Australia and Taiwan.

"The consistent growth in the Asian tourist market is an indication of its tremendous potential. Growth in business traffic of 33.9 per cent from Taiwan was recorded. India, Malaysia and Singapore are also showing increasing interest in South Africa as a long-haul destination," the board said in a statement.

leaders usually denounced as agents of U.S. policies in previous oil market crises.

"There is no analysis pointing to the United States preparing military action against us. If the United States does that, the biggest loser will be itself," Mr. Nateq-Nouri said.

"But for a political or economic offensive it does not need new preparations because it is already busy doing it," he said, citing the oil issue, criticism of Iran for its human rights record, and the death order against British novelist Salman Rushdie.

Higher taxes urged to trim Australian unemployment

CANBERRA (R) — A government report has urged Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating to raise new taxes for a job creation drive to tackle one of the industrialised world's worst unemployment rates.

Proposals by a panel of experts created by Mr. Keating in May aimed at attacking long-term unemployment and slashing the jobless rate to five per cent by the year 2000.

The panel said its programme would slash the pool of long-term unemployed to 90,000 by the year 2000 from 440,000 currently while fundamentally reshaping the country's labour market.

The wide-ranging proposals, which include creating jobs in the private sector for six to nine months for the unemployed and revamping social

security programmes, will be considered for the government's budget statement in May.

"We are starting to see aggregate employment pick up but what we will not see, unless the government and the community focus on this problem, is those jobs being undertaken by the long-term unemployed," Mr. Keating told parliament.

But the proposals outlined in the 241-page draft strategy entitled "restoring full employment" are expensive and could put the government in the uncomfortable position of either raising taxes or trimming back other government programmes.

The total cost of the panel's proposals could be as much as 1.3 billion Australian dollars

(\$875 million) in the year to June 1995, rising to 2 billion Australian dollars (\$1.3 billion) a year for the following two fiscal years, the seven-member panel said.

"I think the way the government has embraced the report is blatant hypocrisy," opposition leader John Hewson told parliament. "These are the people that created the one million unemployed."

Australian has one of the worst unemployment rates in the industrialised world, standing at 11.1 per cent in November and near last year's record high 11.3 per cent.

Mr. Keating said the rate would remain relatively high even as the economy strengthened in the mid-1990s unless those out of work for more than a year returned to the

workforce.

The report said without such programmes, Australia risked an unemployment rate of around seven per cent by 2000 if the economy continued expanding at its current pace.

To reach the goal of five per cent unemployment — the target of Switzerland and the Netherlands — Australia needed economic growth of between 4.5 and five per cent, the report said.

Such growth is considered doubtful, even by some of Australia's more optimistic economists.

The report suggested that the government create a "job compact" to provide jobs for six to nine months for those who had been out of work for an extended period and whose job prospects were "demonstrably poor."

Most of the jobs would be in the private sector. The panel, comprising seven academics and government officials, also recommended an allowance for those caring for children, which would also be available for the spouses of people in low-paid jobs.

Mr. Keating, whose 1993 election promises included the creation of 500,000 jobs over three years, said such measures were at the root of Australia's egalitarian culture.

"The ethos of this country has been around the question of social participation, a 'fair go' and a fair opportunity to participate in our society," Mr. Keating said.

The government said it would respond to the proposals with an official statement early next year.

Japan plans extra budget but delays 94/95 draft

TOKYO (R) — Japan's coalition government says it is planning a third supplementary budget for this fiscal year to try to boost the stalled economy.

But it will break with tradition by leaving the draft of next year's annual budget until after the turn of the year.

"We decided to compile the 1994/95 budget in the coming year and to draw up a third supplementary budget for the current fiscal year, while deliberating political reform bills," Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa said in a weekend statement.

"The economy remains in a severe state which requires close monitoring and we need to ensure we get it on a recovery trend in 1994/95 and on a stable expansionary path in 1995/96," he said.

Mr. Hosokawa's coalition has had to fend off criticism that it is not doing enough to stimulate the economy.

The budget committee of parliament's upper house this

week passed a 709 billion yen (\$6.56 billion) second supplementary budget for this fiscal year.

The extra cash is needed to balance the overall budget for 1993/94 and to help finance a six trillion yen (\$55.5 billion) economic stimulus package announced in September.

The daily Asahi Shimbun Saturday quoted chief cabinet secretary Masayoshi Takemura as saying that the third extra budget would be a drastic and full-scale one.

But Mr. Takemura told a news conference late Friday that the government would not be able to compile the annual budget for fiscal 1994/95 by the end of this year.

The full budget is usually compiled by the end of December for parliamentary approval by the fiscal year-end on March 31. But Mr. Hosokawa appears to have put higher priority on passing political reform bills during the current

extended parliamentary session due to end Jan. 29.

Mr. Hosokawa has earlier pledged to enact political reforms by year-end or take responsibility, suggesting he would either resign or call snap elections.

Gaishi Hiraiwa, chairman of the powerful business lobby Keidanren, said a delay in drafting the 1994/95 budget would run counter to policies to stimulate the economy.

By delaying the budget process, Mr. Hosokawa can also buy more time to negotiate with coalition allies and the finance ministry over tax reform plans for 1994/95, including an expected cut in income taxes of more than 6 trillion yen (\$54.5 billion).

The finance ministry has been insisting that income tax cuts must form part of a single piece of legislation that includes an offsetting rise in consumption tax, now three per cent.

Cobalt prices soar

LONDON (R) — The price of cobalt, a strategic metal used for hardening alloys in jet engines, has soared this week by nearly 40 per cent fears on market shortages and a political crisis in major supplier Zaire.

News that Zaire's metal-rich Shaba province had declared autonomy last weekend initially triggered the price rise. The indecision of Zaire and fellow African producer Zambia over their sales terms for next year also pushed prices higher.

"The Africans usually announce the price and deals are being done well before the end of the year," one trader said, noting that the market was beginning to calm Friday.

But their delay this year, along with other factors, caused consumers to panic over early new year requirements and this set in motion a chain reaction, he said.

Cobalt, a by-product of copper or nickel mines, makes lightweight, heat-resistant alloys favoured in engines and turbines. It also has a possible future as an ingredient in batteries for electric cars.

Stocks are getting low and producers, who were forced to compete aggressively to sell their metal earlier in the year, stepped back from the market.

By Friday, prices were steady at up to \$15.50 a pound for good quality Western origin cobalt, around \$4 higher than a week ago.

African producers are holding off from setting in case the price jumps even further next year, traders said.

"They did not want to set a price of \$15 only to have the free-market roar up to \$20 a few months later," a trader said.

'Oil mischief stems from U.S.'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's parliament speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri said the United States was behind the sharp fall in oil prices.

"This oil mischief stems from America," Tehran's Ahrar newspaper quoted Mr. Nateq-Nouri as saying.

"They play with the price of oil, they start an oil war. Oil prices fluctuate and they usually go down. To avoid a crisis, we should tread somewhat carefully and tighten our belts," Mr. Nateq-Nouri said.

It was the first time a senior Iranian official had directly blamed the United States for

the fall in oil prices which has severely cut into Iran's revenue.

Prices have dropped about 30 per cent this year to five-year lows of about \$14 a barrel.

Iranian statement have blamed the most recent downturn on the high output of producers outside the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at a time when world recession has dampened demand.

In particular, they have studiously avoided blaming fellow OPEC member, Saudi Arabia and other big Gulf Arab producers which Iran's Islamic

leaders usually denounced as agents of U.S. policies in previous oil market crises.

"There is no analysis pointing to the United States preparing military action against us. If the United States does that, the biggest loser will be itself," Mr. Nateq-Nouri said.

"But for a political or economic offensive it does not need new preparations because it is already busy doing it," he said, citing the oil issue, criticism of Iran for its human rights record, and the death order against British novelist Salman Rushdie.

U.S. economy completes year of transition

WASHINGTON (R) — The struggling, sometimes exhausted economic recovery got a second wind as the year drew to a close, showing a vital reservoir that has set the stage for more vigorous growth in 1994.

It was a year of intense economic restructuring by both families and industry, with business replacing expensive debt with equities and individuals refinancing almost punitive long-term debt financing costs.

Interest rates dropped to their lowest levels in a generation as the Federal Reserve (Fed), fuelling the bull stock market, but troubling some older Americans living on fixed incomes even as it unleashed what some economists call a revolution in personal finance.

The low rates finally stimu-

lated housing sales as well as new auto purchases as consumers apparently decided that rates were probably near their bottom.

At the same time, companies kept shedding workers as they sought more efficiency, but as the year progressed job creation overtook this process with the unemployment rate in retreat.

"It has been a transition year from an economy struggling and beset by troubles to one now growing perhaps in a healthy way with bright prospects," said Allen Sinai with Lehman Bros. Global Economics.

Part of the personal finance revolution was a staggering increase in the mutual fund industry through October with investors adding nearly \$250 billion into stock and bond funds, bringing assets to nearly \$2.0 trillion as they fled low

interest bearing certificates of deposits and other bank accounts.

The young and energetic Clinton administration, despite some early missteps, has turned out to be a surprise for economists, many of whom believed it would talk tough but cave in on deficit reduction.

While critics believe the administration has not gone far enough in cutting the country's huge deficit, not to mention the debt accumulated over decades of living beyond its means, policymakers have put a deficit reduction plan into effect and seem to be sticking to their promises.

"There is no question that the administration has turned out to be unexpectedly strong on the deficit and so, in fact, has Congress," said David Jones of Aubrey G. Lanston and Co.

The generally upbeat feeling among many U.S. analysts comes as evidence is mounting that the fourth quarter expansion is going to be much stronger than expected.

Some analysts think the current quarter, fed by strong auto sales and a rebound in activity because of the damaging Midwest flood this summer, may hit as much 5.0 per cent after growing 2.7 per cent in the third quarter, although four per cent seems more realistic.

They think the increase will slow in the first quarter although all of next year will uncork the best showing since 1988 when economy moved ahead by 3.9 per cent.

Since then, the economy has generally been in repose, moving ahead 2.4 per cent in 1989, 1.2 per cent in 1990, showing a recessionary 0.7 per cent de-

cline in 1991 and rebounding with a 2.6 per cent gain last year.

The economy is now expected to move ahead by about 2.7 per cent or 2.8 per cent in 1993 and will be at or exceed 3.0 per cent next year as consumer confidence continues to brighten, companies and individuals improve their debt profile, and more jobs are created.

"The forces of light have reemerged to take over from the forces of darkness," exclaims Mr. Sinai.

This is in stark contrast with Europe and Japan, where the slowdown is continuing. Some improvement is expected next year even as these massive economies continue the pain of restructuring that is largely completed by the United States.

However, the slowdown overseas is also stalking the U.S. economy

since this country's ability to export has been held in check by the lack of demand in these weakened markets.

"Europe is still a drag (on the U.S. economy) but not as much of a drag," said David Wyss of DR/McGraw-Hill.

Analysts also point to the administration's success in patching together the unravelling North American Free Trade Agreement.

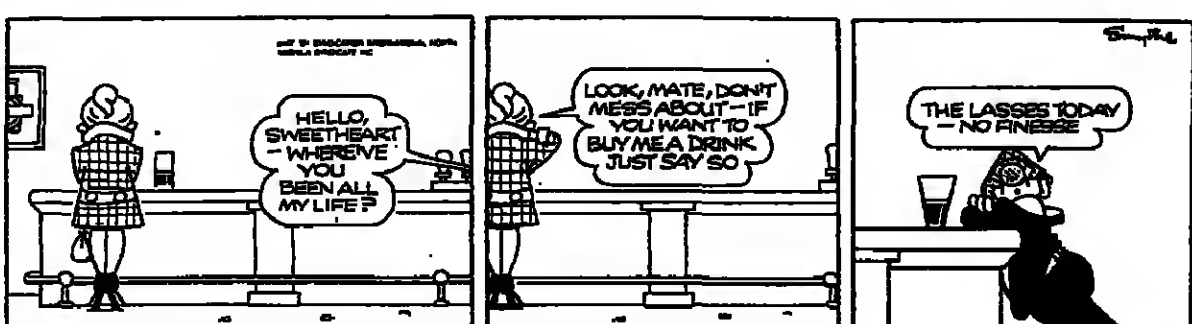
At the same time, the completion of tortuous negotiations on a new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade round is uplifting to analysts.

Over the short term, however, many analysts believe the next move will not come from newly invigorated American companies and a less stressed consumer, but from a very cautious Federal Reserve worried that the expansion might spawn inflation.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



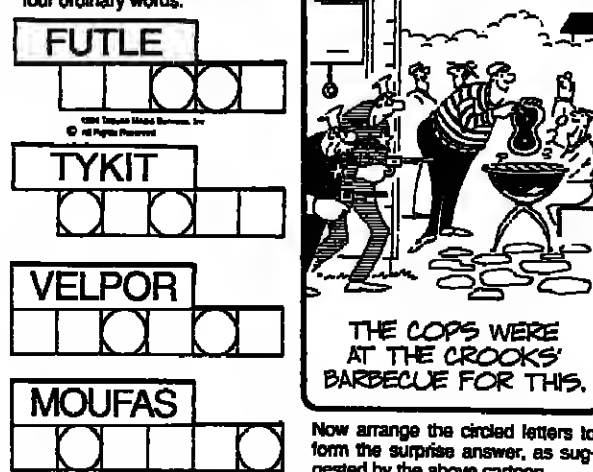
THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



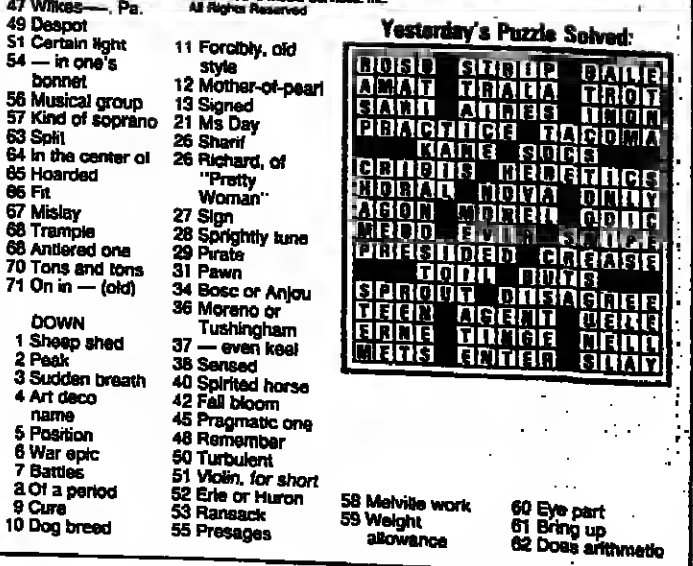
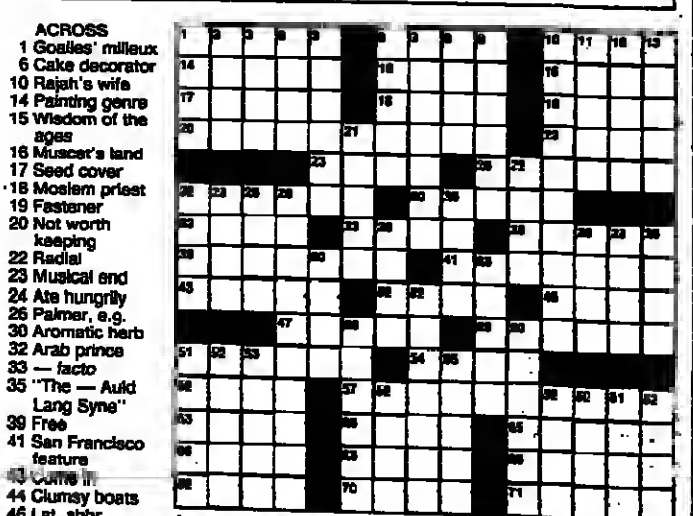
Answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FAITH PARKA UNSOLD ENJOIN

Answer: What the runner called the initial stop in the marathon — FIRST AID

THE Daily Crossword by Al Becker



محز اصن اقص

Shelling reported in Bosnia as Croats release more prisoners

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Fighting with heavy arms has persisted in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, while shelling lessened in the capital Sarajevo and the breakaway Muslim enclave of Bihac, in the north-west, a U.N. spokesman said Saturday.

U.N. military observers meanwhile were to inspect the Rajlovac and Grhavlja districts in northwestern Sarajevo later Saturday following reports that front lines had changed there after several days of heavy fighting, said Major Idesbald Van Biesebeek of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Some 2,000 shells fell Friday between Gracanica and Doboj, about 100 kilometres north of here, where Bosnian Serb forces are fighting Muslim-led Bosnian government forces, the spokesman said.

He also reported artillery and tank fire near Kalesija, east of Tuzla, near the border with Serbia.

But in Sarajevo, "tension lessened" after intense shelling in the past few days, the spokesman said.

Clashes between the Bosnian army and secessionist forces in Bihac also decreased.

Croat forces meanwhile released 101 Muslim prisoners from the Rodoc Prison Camp, in the southern Mostar region,

he said.

As in the past, the release was overseen by the International Committee of the Red Cross with logistic support from UNPROFOR's Spanish contingent.

Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban said Saturday he expected the world to press the Muslim-led army into freeing Croat war prisoners after his forces released more than 1,000 Muslims unilaterally this week.

"It will be clear now who is who in Bosnia, in moral and every other respect," Mr. Boban told Croatian state radio. "I am sure the Muslims will react positively to our decision."

He said he was sure the international community would now lean on the mostly Muslim Bosnian army to free detained Croats as a reciprocal gesture.

Croatian Radio reported Friday night that the Bosnian Croat Defence Council (HVO) had released all remaining Muslim prisoners of war and closed detention centres in HVO-held southwest Bosnia.

In Belgrade, political sources said Serbia's ruling Socialist Party could be denied a majority in Sunday's elections and may form a government coalition with the moderate opposition.

Opinion polls have been banned during the election campaign but newspapers said surveys showed the Socialists, led by President Slobodan Milosevic, would have the largest number of seats.

According to the forecast, the DEPOS opposition group would replace the strongly nationalist Radical Party, a former Milosevic ally, as the second largest faction in parliament.

Even without a working majority of his own, the president appeared content to retain his grip on power despite growing unpopularity over the economic catastrophe that has overtaken the economy under international sanctions.

"Milosevic doesn't go into elections in order to lose," a political source said Saturday.

The general election, the second in Serbia in a year, is being held at a crucial juncture in international negotiations to end the civil war between Muslims, Serbs and Croats in neighbouring Bosnia.

U.N. and European Community envoys met Mr. Milosevic and Croatian government representatives near Belgrade Friday to discuss plans to partition Bosnia into three ethnic states.

There is speculation in the

Serbian capital that Mr. Milosevic has convinced Bosnian Serbs to cede extra territory to the proposed Muslim state in order to coax the U.N. into easing its oil trade sanctions against Serbia.

The warring sides will meet the international negotiators in Geneva Tuesday and EC foreign ministers in Brussels the following day.

Mr. Milosevic, casting himself in the guise of peacemaker, has worked hard to shed his international image as the architect of the territorial wars fought by Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia since their independence from former Yugoslavia.

The conflicts have brought close his ambition to unite all Serbs in a greater Serbia, a goal underwritten by all the main parties contesting the elections.

But they have been pursued at the cost of retaliatory U.N. sanctions that have destroyed Serbia's economy in a whirlwind of hyperinflation, industrial collapse and crime.

Getting the sanctions eased will be the first priority of Milosevic's next government though many fear he could be forced to resort to a state of emergency within weeks as the economy continues to deteriorate.



Members of Taiwan's opposition party Saturday struggle with riot police in Taipei in an attempt to force themselves into a meeting hall where the China — Taiwan talks are held (AFP photo)

Taiwan, China start talks amid protest

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwanese and Chinese negotiators, meeting in Taiwan for the first time ever, began a six-day round of talks Saturday as riot police scuffled with screaming protesters in the street outside.

Negotiators wrangled over provisions of a pact for the repatriation of Chinese asylum-seekers who have hijacked nine airliners to Taipei since April this year. The hijackings have become a major irritant in relations.

Taipei's nationalist government, which lost the Chinese civil war in 1949, has said it is willing to send back the hijackers but has insisted they first be tried in Taiwan and that China promise not to try them a second time.

China has refused to accept the conditions, accusing Taiwan of indirectly encouraging the hijackings by refusing to send back suspects immediately and unconditionally.

Previous talks were held in Singapore and China earlier this year. But the Taipei talks brought the first visit of a Chinese negotiating team to Taiwan, marking a gradual thawing in relations since the late 1980s.

More than 200 members of the main opposition democratic Progressive Party, which wants Taiwan to abandon its official goal of reunification with China, scuffled with club-wielding riot police outside the talks in a Taipei office building.

The demonstrators, carrying banners reading "don't sell out Taiwan", said they feared their government could use the talks to move towards reunification without consulting the island's 21 million people.

No firm agreements were reached on the first day of the talks, which will also discuss fishing disputes and ways to

speed up repatriation of 2,482 illegal Chinese immigrants from Taiwan.

The two sides remained far apart on issues such as whether all hijackers should be sent back without exception and the time period which could elapse between any future hijackings and the repatriation of suspects.

Hsu Hwei-Yow, the chief Taiwanese negotiator, said Taiwan wanted to reserve the right not to repatriate some hijackers if they had valid political or religious motives.

He also said Taiwan could not accept a 15-day time limit for repatriation as demanded by China.

Chinese negotiator Sun Yafu told a news conference: "Hijacking is a serious criminal offence. Hijackers should be dealt with according to their behaviour not according to their motives."

Heavy fighting reported in Angola

LUANDA (R) — Angola's government Saturday reported heavy fighting with UNITA rebels north of the capital Luanda and in other parts of the country as peace talks remained stalled.

"Military sources said there were intense clashes some 100 kilometres northeast of Luanda near the strategically lo-

cated town of Cançacassala, which had been captured by UNITA earlier in the week.

The sources also reported fighting in the town of Mona Quimundo in eastern Luanda Sul Province and rebel troop movement near the besieged provincial capital of Cuito and Meïlongue, in the centre and south.

No more details were immediately available. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

Diplomats in Luanda said month-long peace talks with UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in the Zambian capital Lusaka were stalled and were unlikely to produce any agreement before Christmas.

Pakistani court charges Bhutto's brother

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — A special court Saturday charged Murtaza Bhutto, the jailed brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, with insurgency and attempting to topple the government by force.

"The prosecution has enough evidence to establish the involvement of the accused in the case," said the judge at the special court for speedy trials in the southern city of Karachi.

The court brought four charges against Murtaza Bhutto, younger brother of the prime minister, accusing him of insurgency, activities to destabilise by force the government of Pakistan, spreading hatred and rebellion against the state and provoking anti-state activities.

Murtaza and 14 co-accused pleaded not guilty to the charges, which carry a max-

imum penalty of death and which include involvement in the hijacking of an airliner to Kabul and Damascus in 1981 in which one man was killed.

The 39-year-old Murtaza was arrested on Nov. 3 on his return from Syria after 16 years of self-imposed exile and has been held without bail in a Karachi jail awaiting formal charges.

He had not returned to Pakistan since his father, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was toppled in a military coup in 1977.

He has been accused of masterminding an underground group, Al-Zulfikar, set up after his father was banned in 1979. The group has been blamed for bombings in several Pakistani cities.

The judge set the trial for Jan. 2.

Murtaza's return has provoked an embarrassing rift within the Bhutto family and threatens to split the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The prime minister ousted her mother, Nusrat Bhutto, as PPP chairwoman this month because of Nusrat's support to Murtaza in last October's elections.

"I have my differences," Nusrat Bhutto told reporters at the court when asked if a brief meeting with her daughter at a function Friday marked the mending of fences with Benazir.

"I am still the chairwoman of the party and will continue to act as such," Nusrat said. But Murtaza ruled out any quick reconciliation after Friday's meeting. "It was only an informal chat," he said. "What we need is negotiations on the issue of party leadership."

N. Korea will accept U.S. nuclear proposal with few reservations—report

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Monday will respond positively but with a "few reservations" to a counter offer by Washington on inspection of its nuclear facilities, a Seoul daily said Saturday.

The Kyunghyang Daily, in a front page story, quoted an unnamed diplomatic source in Washington as saying that "with very few reservations, North Korea will convey its acceptance of the U.S. proposal."

The message will be conveyed during an unofficial working-level contact Monday in New York, the daily said, without detailing the reservations. But it linked the reported new flexibility on the nuclear issue to recent policy changes in Pyongyang.

A meeting of the North's Supreme People's Assembly on Dec. 9 put priority on trade, in a move seen by analysts here as indicating a slight shift towards openness by the hitherto closed and rigidly self-reliant Stalinist society.

Unconfirmed reports had said Washington, at the last working-level contact between the two on Dec. 10, offered to halt annual joint South Korean

U.S. military Team Spirit exercises the moment an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team arrived in Pyongyang.

The offer was conditional on the North agreeing to IAEA inspection of all seven of its nuclear facilities and a promise to reopen talks with the South and exchange special envoys.

One week earlier, on Dec. 3, North Korea had said it would accept inspection of five of its seven nuclear facilities, but not a nuclear reactor and a laboratory at Yonghyon, the two most suspect facilities.

The Kyunghyang report came after a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman charged Friday that Washington was putting "artificial obstacles" in the way of bilateral talks, and that it would over yield to U.S. pressure over its alleged programme to produce a nuclear weapon.

"It entirely depends on the U.S. attitude whether the third round of talks are held and the nuclear problem is solved," Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the spokesman as saying.

In the Dec. 10 meeting, Washington had insisted on a return to dialogue between the

two Koreas as a precondition for the third round, KCNA said.

"We cannot but be surprised at the fact that the United States is laying artificial obstacles again, by connecting the exchange of special envoys between the North and the South," the spokesman said.

"If the United States continues to resort to pressure and delaying tactics without showing concern with the progress of the dialogue, it is hard to expect an agreement," he said, adding that "we showed the utmost lenience we could offer at the present stage."

The agency also quoted the official daily Rodong Sinmun as warning that North Korea was "resolved and fully prepared" to meet the worst situation, such as sanctions and war.

The United States has threatened to seek U.N. sanctions against North Korea if the dialogue fails to resolve the nuclear dispute, and possible cooperation with Pyongyang if it is resolved peacefully.

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali is expected in Pyongyang on Dec. 24, the first ever visit to North Korea by a U.N. chief.

Becker ties the knot

LEIMEN, Germany (AFP) — Three-times Wimbledon tennis champion Boris Becker married 26-year-old model Barbara Felts here Friday. The news ends months of speculation on their possible tying of the knot. Felts is expecting their first baby. During the marriage ceremony, about 300 people waited outside Leimen Town Hall, near Heidelberg in south west Germany, despite the heavy rain.

Charlie Chaplin hat, stick sold at auction

LONDON (AFP) — A bat and walking stick belonging to late actor Charlie Chaplin were sold at auction here for £55,000 (\$85,000). The hat and stick, the trade-marks of the silent movie comedian, were sold by a Danish businessman to an anonymous buyer. Charlie Chaplin died in 1977.

U.K. clamps down on drunk-driving

LONDON (R) — Two British drunk-drive offenders, whose recklessness led to the death of their passengers, had their original sentences increased Friday as Britain clamped down on drunk-driving. In what was seen as a test case, Peter Shepherd, 29, had his original sentence of a fine and two-year driving ban increased to three months in prison, and Robert Wernet, 27, had his jail sentence doubled to 18 months. Lord Chief Justice Taylor, Britain's senior judge who handed down the new sentences, said that motorists who kill people in the worst drunk-driving cases should face jail sentences near the maximum of 10 years.

Shepherd and Wernet escaped the stiffer jail terms because they committed the offences before the maximum sentence was doubled to 10 years in August this year. But relatives of drunk-drive victims and anti-drunk-driving campaigners were impressed by the new sentences. "It's almost a green light for drunken drivers to go on killing people with the law hardly taking any notice of them," said John Knight, of the Campaign Against Drunk Driving.

Don't give me a home with a buffalo aroma

DURHAM, New Hampshire (R) — Hamburgers may be the all-American meal, but residents of a New Hampshire town are turning up their noses at buffalo burgers, blocking plans to open restaurant in their neighbourhood. The omelette burgers are the brainchild of David Langley, who runs a buffalo farm in the town and plans to open a restaurant serving buffalo meat as an alternative to beef. But the plan ran into opposition when five of Mr. Langley's neighbours filed suit against the town to block it, charging that the smell of sizzling buffalo burgers would be offensive in a residential zone.

But where do you put the presents?

LONDON (R) — A leading British gallery whose previous exhibits include a file of bricks and a roomful of rice has revived a debate about modern art by giving pride of place to an upside-down Christmas tree. The Tate Gallery in London marked the festive season by commissioning a 22-foot (6.7-metre) fir tree from Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary. It hangs upside down from the lobby ceiling with its tip touching the floor. The roots, covered in gold leaf, crown the otherwise unadorned tree. A gallery statement Friday called it "a tree floating in air with the roots free from their earthly constraints."

Funny, but I don't recall him being that bald

NEW YORK (R) — suspicious-looking U.S. dollar bills, some of which feature an excessively bald George Washington, aren't counterfeit — just new, federal officials say. For weeks sceptical merchants have been asking the U.S. Secret Service about bills that differ in subtle ways from old ones — with a slightly baldier George Washington or a white dot under the eye of Small numbers on the front of the bill have been removed, and other numbers on the back have been moved slightly. The changes were made in June 1992 when the government introduced a new press that triples the output of bills.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IRA debates peace plan, truce

BELFAST (R) — Dozens of IRA units met in secret all over Ireland Saturday divided over whether to heed an Anglo-Irish appeal to lay down their arms in return for a voice in political peace talks. But Republican sources said the IRA activists were likely to agree on their customary Christmas ceasefire while they argued about ending a 25-year war against British rule. "A Christmas truce is likely but the idea of a complete end will take much longer to debate. The Christmas ceasefire could be announced on Dec. 24," a source close to the IRA said. The sources said the meetings involved grassroots activists who would pass on their decisions to the IRA's governing army council, which could meet overhedge next four weeks to give its verdict on the proposals. The meetings are being held on both sides of a border the IRA wants to eliminate to unite the British-ruled and Protestant dominated province with the Catholic Irish Republic. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) activists are studying a statement by Britain and Ireland last Wednesday hailed an historic opportunity to end one of the world's longest civil wars.

Kiev sticks to military demands

MOSCOW (AFP) — Ukraine kept up demands for security guarantees and compensation over its nuclear arsenal in talks with a U.S.-Russian delegation hoping to resolve a standoff over the republic's strategic missiles, news agencies reported Saturday. The Interfax News Agency said that Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Valeri Shmarov and Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko had insisted that the security guarantees must be met by Moscow and Washington before it would agree to dismantle the 46 long-range SS-24 missiles on Ukrainian territory. The ministers also reiterated demands for financial compensation. The three sides agreed to continue their discussions, but did not announce a new date, according to Interfax. The delegation, led by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Mamedov, U.S. special envoy Strobe Talbott and U.S. Under-Secretary for Defence William Perry, was dispatched Thursday to Kiev as U.S. Vice President Al Gore said here that Washington and Russia shared "a strong feeling that this matter needs to be resolved."

U.S. gunman kills 2, then himself

HUGO, Oklahoma (AFP) — A gunman opened fire in the parking lot of a shopping centre, killing a married couple before turning the gun and taking his own life, police said. Three others were wounded in the shooting spree outside a Wal-Mart store near Hugo, in southeast Oklahoma. The gunman was identified as David Rinn. Using a semi-automatic rifle, he killed Luke Sheehan, 52, and his wife Mary Sheehan, 40, who drove a short distance and committed suicide in his truck, said the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. Authorities said a motive for the shooting had not been established, backing away from an earlier theory that the gunman knew the couple. One person was wounded by a bullet and two others were injured by flying glass. Assistant District Attorney Larry Grant said Mr. Rinn went to the local sheriff's office early Friday with a complaint about a dog and became impatient, saying, "I'll prosecute this myself." The official said Mr. Rinn purchased the rifle earlier in the day at a pawnshop, lying on the application about his criminal record. He had been convicted on assault and property crimes charges in California.

Italian mafia plotted to kill magistrate

ROME (R) — Investigators have discovered a plot to kill Sicily's chief anti-mafia magistrate, the Italian News Agency (ANSA) said. The news came as anti-Mafia authorities claimed a major victory against organised crime in eastern Sicily, rounding up some 93 people in a sweep involving 1,000 police and troops. ANSA said news of the suspected plot to kill Palermo Chief Prosecutor Giancarlo Caselli was contained in a parliamentary report on the mafia. A section of the parliamentary report said investigators had received information about plans for a "grave attack" against Mr. Caselli using "an electronic system," the agency said. This was apparently a reference to a remote-control bomb. The mafia had apparently intended to kill Mr. Caselli during a visit to northern Italy. There were no further details.

Toll in Argentine unrest rises to 9

SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO, Argentina (AFP) — Army troops patrolled the streets here in the wake of riots that the hospital said left nine people dead and more than 100 injured. Meanwhile a special government envoy sent to the impoverished region arrived and promised government workers would be paid back wages. The death toll rose to nine in 36 hours of rioting by the workers in the northwestern provincial capital, said Luis Muratore Montefinos, at the Santiago Del Estero Regional Hospital. On Thursday, thousands of demonstrators, many of them government employees who have gone unpaid for three months, took over government headquarters in this northwestern provincial capital, setting fire to furniture and buildings and stoning police. Other public buildings and private homes were looted and burned during the unrest in this city of 300,000 people. Most victims died of gunshot or knife wounds or injuries due to beatings, Muratore Montefinos said, warning that the death toll could rise because many of the wounded were seriously injured.

Left rallies round Mitterrand

PARIS (R) — Socialists rallied behind President Francois Mitterrand Saturday in a row over funding of private schools, accusing France's centre-right government of trying to shatter the delicate sharing of power known as "cohabitation." The Socialist president, in his first serious clash with the conservative government, Friday attacked it for rushing a law through parliament removing limits on state aid to mainly Catholic private schools. Seizing an opportunity to rally the left, which has been in disarray since an election defeat last March, Socialist chiefs followed Mr. Mitterrand's lead Saturday in promoting secular, public education. "We can only feel wounded at the way... the government has dug up the hatchet, destroying an old consensus (on education)," Socialist former Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, a close friend of Mr. Mitterrand, told Reuters. "This decision... goes beyond the issue of private schooling and signals a return to the spirit of Vichy in our institutions," he said, referring to the collaborationist government that ruled over the unoccupied part of France in 1940-44. "All those who believe in the virtues of the republic must mobilise themselves," Mr. Dumas said. Both Mr. Dumas and Socialist Party leader Michel Rocard took part in demonstrations against the new law staged by striking teachers and schoolchildren throughout France Friday.

Olympic skiing champion ends World Cup jinx

VAL GARDENA, Italy (R) — Austrian Olympic Champion Patrick Ortlieb ended a frustrating six-year wait when he won a downhill Saturday, his first victory on Alpine skiing's World Cup circuit.

It was sweet revenge for the burly man from the mountain resort of Lech, set for success in a downhill here Friday until the course conditions eased and allowed a series of higher starters to push him down to sixth.

"I'm not going to start celebrating until number 75 (Alphonse Gomis of Senegal) has skied," a wary Ortlieb told reporters at the finish line after clocking a time of two minutes 04.14 seconds on the Sas-long Piste.

French racer Jean-Luc Crétier, with start number 37, gave the Olympic downhill champion a scare but he had to settle for third place in 2:04.66, his best ever result.

Veteran Swiss downhiller Daniel Mahrer finished second in 2:04.55. Little-known Markus Foser of Liechtenstein, who caused a sensation when winning from start number 66 Friday, could

not repeat his heroics but skied well enough to clock 2:05.19.

"I knew it was only a matter of time before I won a world cup race and it's nice to succeed on such a prestigious course as this," Ortlieb said.

"I was pleased with how I skied on Friday and I knew that I only lost then because the weather conditions changed," added the Austrian, second here in 1988 and third last year.

"It was tough on the nerves at the finishing line but I relaxed a little after (Marc) Girardelli had raced," said the 26-year-old, in his sixth season on the circuit.

Five times World Cup winner Girardelli finished 13th, over a second slower than Ortlieb after taking third place behind unknown foser and Austrian Werner Franz Friday.

"The race today was much fairer and faster," added Ortlieb whose winning time was almost five seconds quicker than that of Foser.

Foser's unlikely win had been put down to a drop in the wind and the effects of the sun on the 3,446 metre piste. But the Liechten-

stein man's 12th place Saturday, from start number seven, proved it had not been a complete fluke. Franz finished down in 23rd.

Ortlieb's victory means the \$1 million bounty offered to the man winning the five classic downhill — in Val d'Isère, Val Gardena, Kitzbuehel, Wengen and Garmisch — will go unclaimed this season.

Friday's race here replaced one cancelled in Val d'Isère last weekend and thus counted as one of the Grand Slam five.

The 31-year-old Mahrer was happy with his second place.

"A top three finish was my aim for December. I'm pleased because I never do especially well on this hill," he said.

The result in part compensated for the poor form of World Cup downhill champion Franz Heinzer, who could manage only 27th spot after his disastrous 58th Friday. Heinzer's showing can in part be blamed on a niggling thigh strain.

"My Swiss team mates will be back on song for the downhill in January," Mahrer promised.

Crétier was Saturday's surprise package, the double French downhill champion finally taking a place on a World Cup podium.

"This is a dream for me. Producing a result like this takes such a weight off my shoulders," he said. "I think we can expect a very strong showing from the French men this season."

Canadian Rob Boyd repeated Friday's fourth place ahead of Italians Kristian Ghedina and Pietro Vitalini.

Norwegian all-rounder Kjetil Andre Aamodt finished eighth to stretch his lead over Austrian Guenther Mader in the World Cup standings to 45 points. Aamodt has 389 points while Mader, 29th on Saturday, has 344.

The scene now switches to the nearby Dolomiti Resort of Alta Badia Sunday for a giant slalom in which Italian hero Alberto Tomba attempts to mark his 27th birthday with a win.

A slalom follows Monday in Madonna Di Campiglio while the speed merchants return to action next Wednesday with a super-G in Ortlieb's home town of Lech.

Austrian skier wins women's downhill

ST ANTON, Austria (R) — Austria's Anja Haas delighted home crowds with the third World Cup downhill victory of her career Saturday, but it was two outsiders who stole the show.

Haas, 22, finished the two-leg race on the shortened Kandahar Course in an unofficial time of two minutes 19.25 seconds.

But 17-year-old team mate Renate Goetschl swept from a starting position of 62 to take fifth place in the first leg and then leaped into second overall in 2:19.35. It was Goetschl's first World Cup downhill race, though she won a slalom in Lillehammer.

Japan's Emi Kawabata, another virtual unknown, finished third in 2:19.41.

The race was run in two legs, because the course had to be shortened after heavy snowfalls put the top of the piste out of action.

The downhill counts towards combined points with a slalom to be raced Sunday and organisers felt running the downhill over one leg on a truncated course would have favoured slalom specialists too much.

In the first leg the course appeared to get faster as the race went on, favouring later starters such as Goetschl and Kawabata, who started 39th. Only the top 30 went on to the second leg.

Canada's Kate Pace, winner of the World Championship downhill in Morioka, Japan, and starting 13th, finished fourth in 2:19.52, while Russia's Varvara Zelenskaya, leader after the first leg, finished a disappointing sixth.

The first leg of the race measured 2,000 metres with a vertical drop of 610 metres, the second was 1,820 metres long, with a vertical drop of 510 metres.

"This was a great race for me," Haas said. "I made a few mistakes in the upper part of the course in the first leg, but the second run was just perfect."

Pele could be banned from World Cup draw

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Pele, soccer's greatest star, may be banned from Sunday's World Cup draw because of a legal dispute with the son-in-law of the president of soccer's world governing body.

FIFA President Joao Havelange refused to say whether Pele, the most recognisable athlete in the soccer world, would be allowed to participate in Sunday's World Cup draw. Despite repeated questions during a news conference Friday, Havelange refused to even utter Pele's name.

"Persons who participate are unimportant to FIFA," said Havelange, who has headed the governing body since 1974. "The presence or absence of one person changes it (the draw) in absolutely no way."

Pele has been sued by Ricardo Teixeira, president of the Confederation of Brazilian Football, in a dispute over the awarding of television rights to games in Brazil. Pele has charged Teixeira with corrupt practices, claiming his group wasn't awarded television rights because it would not pay a bribe.

FIFA officials said some in

the governing body were attempting to change Havelange's mind.

"He has not definitely said no," said Joseph Blatter, FIFA's general secretary, who runs the Zurich-based organisation on a daily basis.

Guido Tognoni, FIFA's chief spokesman, said "some say the door is open; others say it's closed."

"It's an internal matter in the Brazilian Confederation," Tognoni said. "Dr. Havelange doesn't feel comfortable. But we have to respect the wishes of the president."

Alan Rothenberg, president of the U.S. Soccer Federation and chairman of the World Cup USA 1994 Organising Committee, appeared angry and agitated when told of Havelange's remarks.

"The notion that you could have a draw in any country in the world without Pele is unthinkable," said Rothenberg, who arrived at the Las Vegas Convention Centre minutes after Havelange's news conference.

"I find it astounding," Pele, 54, was part of Brazilian teams that won World Cup

titles in 1954, 1962 and 1970. He popularised soccer in the late 1970s when he finished his career with the New York Cosmos of the North American Soccer League and is the only soccer player known to many Americans.

"FIFA is an institution, and the World Cup belongs to it and the final draw belongs to FIFA," Havelange said. "There is no obligation in this matter. It is reserved to FIFA."

Asked if U.S. organisers would be disappointed if Pele didn't appear onstage for Sunday's draw, which has an estimated worldwide audience of 500 million, Havelange said: "Mr. Rothenberg would be very disappointed if we withdrew the World Cup."

Pele was en route to Las Vegas from New York Friday and couldn't be contacted immediately.

"He's the World Cup spokesman for Mastercard," said Marianne Fulgenzi of Mastercard International, a World Cup sponsor. "He plans on being here. It's an integral part of our programme."

Japan dismisses S. Korean challenge to host 2002 soccer World Cup

LAS VEGAS (R) — South Korea's challenge to stage the 2002 soccer World Cup was dismissed Friday by the general secretary of Japan's World Cup Bidding Committee, Tadao Murata.

Murata, who was in the casino city for Sunday's 1994 World Cup finals draw, told Reuters in an interview: "We don't care who else is interested in staging the 2002 finals."

"If South Korea now wants to come in as a rival because they have qualified for the World Cup next year and we have not, that is up to them. We are still confident we have a very good chance."

Murata added: "We want to bring the World Cup to Japan for Asia. We want to prove that an Asian country can stage soccer's most glamorous and popular tournament."

"We have the communications, hotels, sponsor support and stadiums and at this early stage we have virtually fulfilled all FIFA's requirements."

Japan had hoped to qualify for next year's World Cup to boost their bid for the 2002 tournament but an equalising goal by Iraq in the dying seconds of their final qualifying match allowed South Korea to squeeze through along with group leaders Saudi Arabia.

That result gave South Korea the impetus to press home their claims to stage the tournament.

Chung Mong-Joon, president of the South Korea Football Association said then: "We will tell people we have qualified for the World Cup three times consecutively and four times in all: Japan have never been there."

Murata said Japan were bit-

terly disappointed not to qualify. "It was a terrible moment. Such drama. I will never forget it. High hopes and then deep despair in just a matter of seconds. It took us a long time to digest it, but we have got over it."

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, has said it is most likely the 2002 World Cup will be held in Asia. The organisation's General Secretary Sepp Blatter said during a visit to Japan in October that Japan was halfway along the road to staging the finals and would be difficult to catch.

Murata says his country's professional 10-team J-League was going from strength to strength with every match a sell-out. He said soccer had now overtaken baseball as the dominant sport in some parts of Japan.

Witt on verge of completing a successful comeback

HERNE, Germany (AP) — The easy part was easier than expected, and it gave Katarina Witt a much needed confidence boost before the difficult portion of her Olympic comeback bid.

Witt, competing for the first time since 1988, trailed second going into the decisive free programme portion of the German National Figure Skating Championship.

The free programme counts for two-thirds of the overall mark and Witt will need an error-free performance to finish among the top three.

Such a finish will take her to the European Championship in January in Copenhagen, where only the two top Germans will secure berths at the Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway in February.

"This second place gives me confidence. I am very happy with my first competition after

nearly six years," a beaming Witt said after the day's session. "I am eager for the Olympics."

"You really start from zero in the free programme, but I am really encouraged by my first competition," Witt said.

Witt, skating in front of judges for the first time in nearly six years, made a clean presentation of her "Robin Hood" short programme. A double axel came off slightly shaky but otherwise it was a confident performance.

Her routine began with Witt firing a mock arrow in the direction of the nine judges, and they responded by giving her high marks, including a 5.9 for artistic impression, just under the maximum 6.

Witt profited from mistakes made by some of her closest rivals, including Marina Kielmann and Simone Lang, who both finished behind her.

Leading after the first day, as expected, was Tanja Szewczenko, the 16-year-old upcoming star whose short programme included more difficult jumping combinations.

Szewczenko, although nursing a slight strain in her left ankle, said she would try six triple jumps in her free programme Saturday.

"It's been going well in practice and I am going to risk everything," said the German.

The draw for the free programme gave Witt the right to start first among the last group of skaters, followed immediately by Szewczenko.

"It's a good draw. I like going out first because I'm skating only for myself," Witt said.

Olympic champion in 1984 in Sarajevo and in 1988 in Calgary, Witt has picked Pete Seeger's anti-war song, Where

Have All The Flowers Gone for her free programme.

The theme was picked in part to send a message about the suffering of war-battered Sarajevo, where she won her first Olympic title.

The first time she presented the routine — during a show in Frankfurt on Dec. 3, her 28th birthday — Witt fell on her first triple jump, a relatively simple toe loop.

Critics called the presentation a flop and few experts expected Witt to be able to challenge with only four uncomplicated triple jumps in her programme.

"I was very nervous in Frankfurt, but I've put that behind me," Witt said.

"I can laugh again. I am glad about the way I withstood all the pressure," she said. "Now I have to concentrate on tomorrow."

U.S. to launch professional soccer league in 1995

LAS VEGAS (R) — The United States is preparing to launch a 12-team professional league in April 1995, U.S. Soccer President Alan Rothenberg has announced. The league will run from April to September, cities and stadia have still to be selected.

Rothenberg, chief executive of the U.S. World Cup organisers, presented a business plan for the league to FIFA, soccer's world governing body, Friday and was given their sanction to go ahead.

FIFA stipulated when they awarded the United States the 1994 World Cup that the

Americans set up a professional league.

Rothenberg promised that this league would succeed where others had failed in North America.

He said they were close to concluding the television contract which they believed was vital to a league's success.

The league, known as Major League Soccer, will be run by a single entity which will own all players and teams.

Teams will be restricted to three foreign players each, although Rothenberg said he hoped that number might be increased for the first few sea-

sons to help boost its attractiveness and ensure top-class teams.

Rothenberg, who will be involved in the financing and management of the new league, had his proposals accepted earlier this month by the U.S. Soccer Federation. Two other bids had been considered.

He said the league was backed by capital of \$100 million which would be used to improve stadia, speed the building of new ones, buy back American players' contracts from European clubs and provide competitive salaries.

Rothenberg said Major League Soccer had already had preliminary discussions with investors, potential sponsors and a major broadcaster.

"I am confident we will conclude an excellent broadcasting contract early next year which will give exposure to this league and encourage major sponsors to become involved," he said.

"We believe the time has never been more right for a professional league to succeed. The level of participation in soccer in this country has been growing by leaps and bounds

and we have proved in organising the World Cup that we can convert participants into spectators."

"I have no doubt that a league like this will be successful."

Rothenberg was involved as a team owner in the failed North American Soccer League of the 1970s which attracted world stars such as Pele, Franz Beckenbauer, Johan Cruyff and Bobby Moore.

FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter said his organisation was optimistic about the future of soccer in the United States.

The 27 cities which bid to host World Cup games, plus an additional six, will be invited to bid for a team in January.

Successful cities will have to help provide stadia and show there is strong local support by getting advance deposits for season tickets.

"It's important to locate in communities which show support for professional soccer," Rothenberg said.

He offered to use the league for experimenting with changes to the game, including the use of larger goals.

PASSPORT LOST

Indian passport No. V 790507 issued to Gurnmeet Singh and Residence Permit No.: 360/303950 lost in Amman a week ago.

Finders please call the Embassy of India tel.: 622098

STEREO FOR SALE

Audio research pre & power Amp, Music Fidelity Amp P-280. B & W Speaker 802. Philips CD player 960.

Please call tel.: 817286, 6-8 p.m.

NEW BUILDING FOR RENT

ATTRACTIVE LOCATION

- Adjacent to Intercontinental Hotel
- Ideal for Embassy Housing or Company Head Office
- Could be Furnished
- Consists of :
 - Ground Floor with Parking Space 275 m2.
 - 1st and 2nd Floors each has 2 Apts. (115 m2 and 160 m2)
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Super Deluxe Apartment for Rent

A 150 square metre apartment, consisting of three bedrooms, two bathrooms, large shaped saloon and dining room, wooden kitchen with veranda, telephone and separate central heating.

Location : southern Umm Al Summaq, behind Firas Al Ajlouni school, 700 metres away from Jaber compound.

Please call Tel. 747774, Eng. Ayman Al Sweiss House between 3:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m.

FOR SALE BY TENDER/ 2 DUTY UNPAID CARS

- 1986 Mercedes 200, white, automatic gear, radio cassette, A/C, 126599 km.
- 1987 Renault 25, silver, automatic gear, radio cassette, A/C, 111175 km. Both good.

Sealed bids for purchase to reach Bulgarian embassy max. end of December 1993. Tel: 699391

البيع

معروض للبيع بطريقة العلوق المخبوم اثاث خشبي وادوات منزلية غير صالحة يمكن معيئة هذه اللوازم والمزاد عليها في مستودعات السفارة الامريكية خلف بيتزات يوم الثلاثاء ٩٣/١٢/٢١ من الساعة ١٢ ظهرا حتى الساعة الرابعة بعد الظهر.

يطلب تأمين نقدي مسطر ٢٠٪ من قيمة المزاد

FOR SALE

By sealed bid: Used furniture and appliances at the American embassy warehouse behind Pizza Hut, Mecca Street.

From 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. Dec. 21. Refundable 20 per cent deposit on all bids.

TODAY	Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Cinema	Tel.: 699236	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hishari's	Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA		CONCORD		PLAZA		Al film Nuron		AHLAN THEATRE	
	Richard Gere, Julia Roberts in PRETTY WOMAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Clint Eastwood — in IN THE LINE OF FIRE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Kim Basinger — in Two Hot To Handle Shows: 3:15, 6, 8:15, 10:15		KIRK RIVERA, STEVE MESSINA in HOT STEPS Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		presents a play entitled: Al film Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Ameer Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Shamer, Foad Shomali In addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold at 2.5		The political comedy WELCOME ARAH SUMMIT Daily 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday English synopsis available	

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey offers to revive pipeline idea

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Turkey is ready to revive a project to supply water to wealthy Gulf Arab states through a pipeline from two of its rivers, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciler told a newspaper here Saturday. "It is clear the Middle East is undergoing dramatic developments towards peace," she told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Ittihad. "If regional states show interest, Turkey could revive the water peace pipeline." Turkey proposed the ambitious project six years ago to supply water from its twin rivers of Euphrates and Tigris to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE. It paid around \$2 million for a feasibility study on the project, which it estimated to cost around \$21 billion at the time. It dubbed the project the Peace Pipeline as a symbol of what it called prosperity and cooperation among regional countries. But GCC states have turned down the proposal on the grounds its costs have increased to \$27 billion and it carries security risks.

Lebanon assures Turkey on Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (R) — Lebanon has told Turkey that Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan is persona non grata in Lebanon and that it does not want guerrillas to use Lebanese territory to prepare for attacks in Turkey, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri gave the assurances on Friday during his visit to Turkey, which has been pressing Syria, Lebanon, Iran and the Kurds in northern Iraq to crack down on the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). Lebanon has closed down PKK training camps in Syrian-controlled eastern Lebanon but the Ocalan, the PKK leader, does visit Lebanon occasionally and some Kurdish guerrillas remain in Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley. Mr. Hariri, asked whether the Lebanese government would detain Mr. Ocalan if it caught him in Lebanon, told the Turkish newspaper hurriyet: "We will throw him out of Lebanon."

EC gives Syria development aid

DAMASCUS (R) — The European Community (EC) is looking for stronger economic and social links with Syria after it approved a financial protocol for the country totalling more than \$178 million, a statement released here Saturday said. The statement issued by the European Commission in Damascus said the financial protocol approved by the European Parliament on Wednesday to Syria amounting to 158 million European currency units (\$178 million) would finance development projects. The European Parliament unblocked the aid to Syria which had been held up because of concerns over human rights.

Militants kill police colonel in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — Suspected Muslim militants on Saturday shot and killed a police colonel as he was leaving his house in northern Cairo, police said. Colonel Ahmad Shaulan, of the state security services, was attacked in the working-class Matariya neighbourhood as he climbed into his car heading for work, they said. He was wearing civilian clothes. The assailants, whose number was not specified, fled the scene and security officers launched a manhunt, they added. The shooting comes 48 hours after the hanging of three militants convicted of seeking to overthrow the secular government of President Hosni Mubarak. Fundamentalist organisations have repeatedly threatened to avenge the executions. Col. Shaulan's death brings to 81 the number of policemen killed since March 1992 when extremists stepped up their anti-government campaign. More than two-thirds of them were posted in southern Egypt.

Israeli undercover units strengthened

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army has stepped up the activities of its undercover units responsible for tracking down wanted Palestinians, due to a rise in anti-Israeli attacks, a commander of one of the units said Saturday. "We have a bigger presence on the ground and our activities have been bolstered, due to the growth in the activities of (extremists) who claim success in killing settlers," the commander told Israeli Radio. "They are using increasingly sophisticated methods, and we are adapting to them, because our work against wanted armed Palestinians continues." The colonel, whose name was not given, was from a unit deployed in the occupied West Bank. He said there was no question of dismantling the special units, whose members are usually disguised as Palestinians, despite the autonomy accord signed Sept. 13 in Washington.

Christian, Jewish leaders to meet

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Christian and Jewish leaders from 96 countries will meet at an inter-faith conference in Jerusalem next February 1, an organiser said on Saturday. "It is the first international meeting between the different Christian churches and the Jewish religion," Avraham Fried, the director of the Centre for Cultural and Social Studies in Jerusalem, told Reuters. Among those due to attend are Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger from the Vatican, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah and Israel's chief rabbis.

Libya, Iran urge anti-West unity

CAIRO (API) — Libya and Iran urged fellow Muslims to work together, strengthening their religion to meet the challenge of all Islam's common foe, the West. "The enemy wants to sow discord among Muslims," Libyan Prime Minister Abu Zeid Omar Durhad said. "The Islamic countries should muster all their resources and show solidarity... to eliminate these problems." Libya Radio reported his comments Saturday in a broadcast monitored in London. It said visiting Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran, joining Mr. Durhad in the appeal after a meeting in Tripoli on Friday, offered greater Iranian cooperation with Islamic countries.

Iran says dozens of dissidents return

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran said Saturday that two dozen dissidents linked to a leading opposition group based in Iraq have given up the fight and returned to their homeland. The Islamic Republic News Agency, said the dissident, "member and supporters of the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, had turned themselves in at Iranian embassies abroad, "expressing regret for their past wrongdoings." The state-run agency said they were flown Saturday to Tehran from the United Arab Emirates and apparently tried to create the impression that the returnees would not be severely punished. There was no way of establishing the veracity of the report, monitored by the Associated Press in Nicosia. A Mujahadeen spokesman, Ali Safavi, called it "a sheer lie," had "a desperate reaction by the mullahs" to the organisation's challenge.

American aid worker maimed in Somalia

NAIROBI (AFP) — An American aid worker and several Somalis were seriously wounded when their vehicle hit a landmine near the southwestern Somali town of Luc, a relief official said Saturday. Ken Rutherford of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has had a leg amputated and doctors fear that he may lose the other one, an IRC official said. Mr. Rutherford, 28, was evacuated to the Kenyan capital Nairobi for the operation, and was to be flown to the United States for further treatment. The details of the incident, which occurred on Thursday, were still unclear. IRC officials said. The condition of the Somalis was unknown. Several foreign aid workers have been shot dead and several others wounded since foreign troops landed in Mogadishu last December. Four U.S. soldiers were killed by a landmine blast in August.

Israel may accept peacekeepers in Gaza

The Jerusalem Post

ISRAEL has for the first time agreed to an international peace-keeping presence in the Gaza Strip, according to the draft proposal it submitted to the PLO last week in Cairo.

The Jerusalem Post has reviewed the 90-page document and found the following points:

— The proposal allows for up to 100 civilians who may not possess weapons to comprise what the document terms a temporary, international presence. The civilians can help

in such duties as assisting the Palestinian police.

The document lists what Palestinian organizations are acceptable and whose imprisoned members would be eligible for release.

— The proposal makes it clear that when trouble erupts anywhere in the areas of Palestinian self-rule, the IDF, (Israeli military) would be responsible. This includes the possibility of war or infiltration of hostile forces in Gaza or Jericho.

According to the document,

"If there is a conflict between Israeli security authorities and any other authority, power or responsibility... Israeli security authorities and responsibility shall prevail pending the resolution of this dispute and Israel may act to restore the situation of that prior to the conflict."

— Officials regard the most sensitive portion of the document as that dealing with extradition, something not dealt with in the declaration of principles.

Regarding what Israel can

do when its forces are in pursuit of suspected terrorists, and have information that a wanted criminal has sought refuge in Gaza or Jericho, the document says when a Palestinian commits a "serious crime" against an Israeli, the army can demand the transfer or arrest of the Palestinian suspect. If the Palestinian police force fails to do that, Israeli authorities are to do the job themselves.

— The Israeli proposal outlines the Palestinian police force. It will consist of five branches: a civil police; a para-

military gendarmerie; internal security intelligence similar to the General Security Service; emergency services, and coastal police.

Palestinian and Israeli security forces will organise joint patrols in several areas of the Gaza Strip, according to the Israeli proposal. The document rules out any transfer of police authority.

A senior PLO source dismissed the Israeli document, saying "it's not worth the garbage can it should be thrown into."

Kuwait sad to hear talk of ending Iraq curbs

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's prime minister said it was sad to hear speculation about a possible lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq, the Arab Times reported Saturday.

"It is really sad to see some of those who are deceived by (Iraqi President) Saddam (Hussein) currently talking about removing the international blockade on the Iraqi regime," Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah was quoted as saying.

"One should not forget that the current Iraqi regime is the real reason for this economic catastrophe which has brought hardships to the Iraqi people," he was quoted as saying. Sheikh Saad, who did not identify who was talking about lifting sanctions, was speaking in an interview with the Saudi newspaper Al Jazeera, the English-language newspaper said.

Sheikh Saad reiterated a demand that Iraq recognise the newly-demarcated border and the sovereignty of Kuwait. He also repeated a long-standing accusation that Iraq is detaining more than 600 Kuwaitis and people of other nationalities captured during its 1990-91 occupation.

Iraq, which occupied Kuwait for seven months in 1990-91, still claims Kuwait as its 19th province. Baghdad denies it still holds anyone detained during the Gulf crisis.

Sheikh Saad said Iraq had consistently refused to comply with U.N. resolutions requiring it to sell \$1.6 billion worth of oil under strict U.N. monitoring to pay for humanitarian aid and compensation to war victims.

Iraq has said oil sales under these conditions would be humiliating and a violation of its sovereignty.

Kuwait says it does not formally demand the removal of the Saddam government but would like all major disputes between the two countries removed before sanctions are lifted.

The Al Jazeera report made no mention of the start last week of Baghdad's repatriation of Iraqis from a border strip the United Nations has defined as Kuwaiti territory.

The Iraqi move, easing one of many points of tension between Iraq and Kuwait, was the latest in a string of positive Iraqi gestures to the international community in the past month.

Other gestures have included Baghdad's acceptance of long-term monitoring of its future weapons potential and releases of Western jail inmates.

Western diplomats say Iraq would have to formally recognise Kuwait and the demarcated border before Washington would even consider agreeing to lift the embargo.



'ARREST': Israeli soldiers 'arrest' a Palestinian boy in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Palestinian hardliners consolidate alliance

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — After months of deliberations, hardline Palestinian factions have formed an alliance dedicated to wrecking the Israel-PLO autonomy deal, faction leaders said Saturday.

They said the "Alliance of Palestinian Forces" will soon set up a joint command to direct the six-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The combined strength of the 10 groups, which espouse ideologies ranging from Marxism to Islamic fundamentalism, could hamper Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's quest to take control of territories that will soon gain autonomy from Israel.

It also will add to the challenges Mr. Arafat faces in implementing the already delayed Sept. 13 Israel-PLO autonomy accord, which foresees limited interim self-rule for nearly two million Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin failed to agree on implementation of the deal during talks in Cairo on Dec. 12, one day before Israel was to have begun a partial pullout from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Prospects for another Arafat-Rabin meeting remained unclear, and Palestinian opponents and Jewish settlers, who also oppose the accord, have stepped up violence in the occupied lands.

The 10 Palestinian hardline groups variously advocate an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, seized from Jordan and Egypt in 1967, and the total destruction of Israel.

The hardliners formed an opposition front in September 1992 to challenge the PLO's moderate strategy. But it has

not been able to seriously undermine Palestinian participation in the peace process.

Since the Israel-PLO accord was signed, the 10 groups have sought to consolidate the alliance. But their efforts were hampered by calls from fundamentalist members to form a new command to replace the leadership of Mr. Arafat.

Abraham Ghosheh, a Jordan-based spokesman for the fundamentalist Hamas movement, told the Associated Press that the new alliance was formed on Thursday after a two-day meeting in Damascus.

He said: "Our objective is to consolidate Palestinian ranks inside the occupied territories and in the diaspora to support the uprising and escalate resistance against the occupation."

"But our main and immediate goal is to wreck the Palestinian autonomy plan," said Mr. Ghosheh, without giving details of the alliance's political programme.

Mr. Ghosheh said the Damascus-based alliance will also work towards rebuilding Palestinian institutions "on democratic bases and away from the current single-handed policy" of Mr. Arafat.

A Democratic Front leader who attended the Damascus meeting said the leadership of the new alliance will rotate among the chiefs of the 10 hardline factions.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, he said the alliance will meet again in Damascus on Dec. 26 to finalise organisational details.

In addition to Hamas, the 10 hardline factions include the fundamentalist Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah-Palestine as well as the Marxist Popular and Democratic fronts for the liberation of Palestine, the second and third largest factions of the PLO.

PLO staff demand pay

AMMAN (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) employees staged a sit-in Saturday at the PLO mission to demand payment of their salaries for the past six months.

Protesters said they represented some members of the Palestine Liberation Army stationed in Iraq and activists of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fateh faction in Jordan.

Several dozen Palestinians sat in front of the mission for about 30 minutes before dispersing peacefully. Some said they planned to stage a demonstration with slogans and banners on Sunday.

Zakariya Al Habashneh, who is demanding backpay from October 1991 after working for Fateh in Lebanon, said: "We have not received our salaries for many months: some of us for two years."

"The only thing we get is promises, which are not enough to feed our families," he said outside the PLO mission.

"If we are not paid, then we will use every means to secure our rights," said Mr. Habashneh. He did not elaborate.

A senior PLO official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Amman mission did not have enough funds to meet the demands of the protesters.

"The only thing we could do is to send their demands to the PLO," said the official.

PLO finances are controlled directly by Mr. Arafat, who is based in Tunis.

Many Gulf countries stopped their financial aid to the PLO when Arafat supported Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. They also froze several hundred million dollars in "liberation" tax collected from Palestinian expatriates.

The dried up donations have forced the PLO in 1991 to slash its \$300 million annual budget by 70 per cent.

Aideed lieutenants said to fast in jail

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Three officials of Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed's faction have launched a hunger-strike to protest the "very harsh conditions" of their imprisonment by U.N. forces in Somalia.

In a letter released late Saturday, the three officials of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) said they had been "fasting from food or drink" because of the conditions in which they have been held since their arrests in September.

"We are held in very harsh conditions of solitary confinement in strict incommunicado and blindfolded, with bad food and a lack of body washing and laundering water, under extremely scorching sun on an island off the southern coast of Somalia," the three men said in the letter, released by the SNA.

The organisation failed to explain how the men had managed to get the letter out of their place of detention.

The three being held are Osman Otto, a wealthy businessman considered to be the financier of the SNA, Omer Salah Elmi and Mohammed Hassan Awale.

"Our conditions of health were already bad and we don't know how our health and even lives will be after fasting," the letter said. The date of when they began the hunger-strike was crossed out and illegible.

"We appeal to the Somali people, world leaders and peoples, and human rights groups to look into our case and secure our release and those of other Somali captives as well."

"We were arrested and detained unlawfully and unfairly by sheer force," they said.

Last month the U.N. released around 30 supporters of General Aideed and suspended a manhunt for the warlord, wanted in connection with an attack that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers.

SNA officials said the hunger strike began on Thursday and would continue until U.S. forces set them free.

American troops serving as U.N. peacekeepers detained the three men during an unsuccessful campaign to capture and try Gen. Aideed for planning a massacre of Pakistani troops in June.

The hunt was called off a battle in which Gen. Aideed's militia killed 18 U.S. servicemen.

It was not possible to authenticate the letter and the SNA did not explain how they wrote it and signed it under the conditions it described.

The men are believed to be held near the southern port city of Kismayu.

Judge: Lawyer can give police Jackson evidence

LOS ANGELES (R) — A judge ruled Friday that the lawyer for a boy who claims he was sexually molested by pop star Michael Jackson can continue supplying evidence to criminal investigators. The 13-year-old boy has sued Jackson in civil court. The superstar's sought to have a "gag order" placed on Larry Feldman, the boy's lawyer, to prevent him from speaking about the case. Superior Court Judge David Rothman ruled that while evidence gathered by Mr. Feldman and provided to police and district attorneys' investigator was potentially detrimental to Jackson's case, it did not threaten a fair trial. Investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department and two district attorneys' offices are examining the boy's allegations to determine if criminal charges should be brought against Jackson. Investigators say they do not yet have enough evidence to formally charge the superstar. The 35-year-old entertainer has denied the boy's charges. One of Jackson's lawyers said Friday that the reclusive singer may break his silence next week.

Vatican says birth control exploits women

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican Friday renewed its condemnation of the use of birth control, saying it encouraged promiscuity, enabled men to exploit women and tore families apart. "The so-called sexual revolution, far from liberating human beings... has turned many into slaves of promiscuity," it said in a document marking the 25th anniversary of the "humane vitae" encyclical. The document was written by clerics and lay members of a Vatican Congress on the Encyclical, which was released in 1968 by Pope Paul VI and contained the Roman Catholic Church's strongest denunciation of contraception. "The widespread use of contraception facilitates the exploitation of women by men who are looking to satisfy their sexual desires without making any commitments," it said.

Some of the biggest victims of birth control are the broken down bonds between husbands and wives. "Experience has shown that the rise in divorces and the number of abandoned spouses and children who are left with just one parent," it said.

Place your bets for 1994

LONDON (R) — Do you fancy a bet on Prince Charles renouncing his right to the British throne or his bachelor brother Prince Edward marrying during 1994? British bookmakers William Hill will give you odds of 5-1 and 14-1 against respectively. Opening a book Friday on various events punters can have a flutter on for the next year, they also quote 20-1 against Eurodisney in France closing permanently, 50-1 against Queen Elizabeth abdicating and 100-1 against Margaret Thatcher being reappointed leader of Britain's ruling Conservative Party.

Rooney's novel idea for a book

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Mickey Rooney will make his debut as a novelist next spring in a unique venture with a New York book publishing company. In an interview Friday, Rooney said he had signed a contract with Carol Books under which he will receive no advances against royalties but will receive half the profits from the book. "To my knowledge, no author has ever come to this type of arrangement with a publisher," Rooney said. Steven Schragis, the publisher, said the idea of an equal partnership between a publisher and an author was a unique one. "We are a midsize company, and it is not easy competing against the giant publishing conglomerates. This is a way for a midsize publisher to publish in the big leagues," Mr. Schragis said. "A celebrity name is a big plus when it comes to publishing. Up to now the only way to get a celebrity author has been to pay big money up front. The idea of an equal partnership never got broached before," he added. Rooney said under the agreement he would have equal control of the book cover, how the book will be edited and how it will be publicised and sold. "It also eliminates a lot of middle men such as literary agents, which I happen to believe can be more of a hindrance than a help," Rooney, whose 1965 autobiography, I.E. was a bestseller. He said his debut novel, Search for Sonny Skies, would be loosely based on the child stars he knew in Hollywood when he himself was a child prodigy.